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edited by Charles Brasch

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NOTES

Of all the New Zealand settlements, that of Otago began against the most dramatic background. March and April, 1848, were warm, still months, and the *John Wickliffe*, and three weeks later the *Philip Laing*, cast anchor in the calm waters of a harbour set among thickly wooded hills that rang all day with the song of hidden birds. While the young settlers were landing in that serene autumn weather to add another province to the New World, the Old which they had left was shaken violently behind them. In the greatest convulsion of the nineteenth century, the people of France, Austria, Italy, Germany, rose one after another and struggled to remake their countries in the same image of an ideal, free society which other men were crossing Atlantic and Pacific to create from the beginning on virgin soil.

For although conservative in some respects, the founders of Otago too—and not least their far-seeing, large-minded spiritual leader Thomas Burns—were determined on a more just and better ordered way of life than they had known before. News of events on the continent began to reach them after four or five months. Some, perhaps, as they laboured to found their new society among the manuka and swamps and bush of the Dunedin hills, may have understood that the people of Europe in their very different circumstances were trying to realize aims similar to their own. But it would have been difficult to follow the progress of the movements, either from the journals arriving at irregular intervals from home or from *The Otago News*, which was started in December, 1848, as the first newspaper in the province, and itself depended on second-hand reports arriving with the same irregularity. Affairs on the continent certainly became more confusing, and since the original aims of the movements were nowhere achieved, it is not surprising if distant observers lost sight of them.

But if the venture of 1848 failed in Europe, it succeeded in Otago, succeeded, that is, inasmuch as the settlement did establish itself, and did offer some of the freedom of opportunity which men had hoped for there. The New World was growing on other frontiers too: in the same year the

United States had annexed California and New Mexico. It was not in Europe that freedom and hope were now to be sought. The most striking, and for many the most hopeful, document of that year of revolutions came indeed out of Europe; but the Communist Manifesto was slow to bear fruit, and it does not seem to have penetrated to New Zealand until much later. In a speech in Dunedin in 1887 Grey could declare rhetorically, looking forward to a world dominated by the English-speaking nations, 'What are the quarrels of the princes of Europe to us?' The idea of the New World (if it may be called so) appeared to the inhabitants of that world to be operative there alone, and if not to have died out at least to be no longer realizable in the Old, where it was born. In the same speech Grey called on his hearers to 'strive by our laws, by our customs, to save men from the countless ills which they have suffered in the oldest countries, and from which we can relieve them here.'

Many influences have gone to form the Otago of today. Mr Prior contributes to this issue a study of certain events and ideas which had a large part in forming the impulse towards the original settlement and in determining its character. Until 1861 Dunedin was intensely Scottish, and if Cargill had had his way would have remained jealously Free Church; but in the undeveloped state of the province any settlers of good character were welcome, and the influx of newcomers which the gold rush brought soon swept away all attempts to restrict its development.

After nearly forty years of life its people took for presiding spirit one who belonged to Scotland by his birth but to all the world by his genius, and whose adoption in Dunedin seemed to point to the imaginative transformation which the Scottish idea—approaching closely in this to the idea of the New World—was to undergo in crossing the seas. It is not statesman or soldier or pastor whom they set to watch over the city, but a poet, Robert Burns—the only poet to whom New Zealanders have cared to put up statues: for Timaru and Auckland also remember him. Is it symbolic that he should sit in the Octagon turning his back upon Church and State? Poets rarely give allegiance to an established order; they are searching always for some fuller, freer life than the one they know, golden age in the past or just society in the future; and we may imagine the statue of Burns

expressing the perpetual dissatisfaction of the people of Otago with what is and their vision of what might be, keeping alive among them, in its purest form, the idea of the New World.

Another anniversary of interest falls this year. Fifty years ago in February Thomas Bracken died. He was a popular figure in his day as a journalist, a liberal (or rather a radical) politician, a good companion, a writer of light verse. How seriously his serious poetry was taken by the more discriminating is doubtful: Grey and Stout, in the prefaces they wrote—it was a public occasion—to his most ambitious volume, that sad mausoleum *Musings in Maoriland*, both expressed themselves guardedly as to its merits. And now his humorous Irish doggerel is alone readable, excepting the piece by which he is still best known, *Not Understood*. This is Bracken's only poem written with directness and feeling and not vitiated by a self-conscious literary flavour. Unhappily that is not enough to make it a good poem: it reeks of self-pity and false sentiment; did he write it, one wonders, in his cups? In its romantic, nostalgic defeatism it typifies one aspect of that late nineteenth century feeling expressed also in such once-celebrated poems as Arthur O'Shaughnessy's 'We are the music makers' and the *Strophen aus der Fremde* of Georg Herwegh (which may be found in some of the older German anthologies), and—on a higher level—by Verlaine and by Dowson. It is strange to come upon this world-weariness—and to find it so readily echoed, for *Not Understood* was immensely popular—in the raw bright air of the New World.

Bracken is notable as one of the first literary men in New Zealand who can be called professional writers, although the writing by which he lived was journalism. Others—Domett, Bowen, Pember Reeves—had greater intellectual distinction and wrote verse which was often more skilful than his, but they were not writers first and foremost; while B. L. Farjeon left the colony after six years, Butler after five, and J. G. S. Grant published nothing larger than pamphlets. Perhaps only Vincent Pyke can share this eminence with Bracken. Both of them, it may be recalled, like Farjeon and Grant, wrote in Otago. The shade of Burns was not to preside over a land where the muses were without honour.

ARTHUR N. PRIOR

DISRUPTION

THE FOUNDERS of the province of Otago were Scottish Presbyterians, and Scottish Presbyterians of quite a special breed. They were not members of a national church which had been Presbyterian in form (with Episcopalian intervals) for nearly two centuries, but of a denomination born of the 'disruption' of such a church only five years before the first emigration; and while they still named many of their churches after John Knox, they named the port of Dunedin after the Disruption leader Thomas Chalmers. Nor, however, were they ordinary Nonconformists. The story of the origin of the Free Church of Scotland, from which the members of the first organized Otago settlement were drawn, is an involved one; but it is worth taking this occasion to retell it, not only because it forms part of what might be called the pre-history of Otago and of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, but also because a proper understanding of it involves and illuminates principles of ecclesiastical organization, activity and development which concern many beside Presbyterians.

Although Otago was a Free Church settlement, and those who know the province will still recognize reincarnations of Chalmers there, New Zealand Presbyterianism has at no period simply reproduced the divisions of Presbyterianism in Scotland; and even if it had, I doubt whether that in itself would make the story of the Disruption one of general interest to New Zealanders. But denominationalism as such is, or ought to be, a matter of general interest. It is one of the most pronounced features of the religious life of this country, as it is of most countries in the New World; and its most serious effect is one which we often ignore, namely that it cuts off religious bodies not merely from one another but from the community as a whole. It is this characteristic of denominationalism which the story of the Disruption is particularly well fitted to illustrate.

The Disruption also has a strong dramatic interest—there are few passages of ecclesiastical history that have quite so much resemblance to a well-constructed work of fiction. And

in fact many well-constructed works of fiction have been put out from time to time as histories of the Disruption. The present study is not intended as another of them; but the reader should perhaps be warned that it has a certain inevitable one-sidedness. I have tried to give a picture of the disintegration of a National Church, and of the part played in that disintegration by the decay of an idea; but the decay of that idea was itself partly due to factors of a political and economic character which have had to be ignored here.

In most parts of Europe, the Reformation of the sixteenth century was a national affair. There were, indeed, a few—the ancestors, for the most part, of present-day Congregationalists and Baptists—who advocated 'reformation without tarrying for any', and the 'gathering' of those whom they considered to be true Christians into exclusive denominations. But the aim of the principal Reformers, and in many places their achievement, was rather to take over and remodel, with varying degrees of radicalism, the religious institutions already established in the different countries of Europe. And even where, as in France, they had to be content with a sectional following, they held the only view of the Church that is *compatible* with the treatment of its membership as including entire nations—the view that the Church is the bearer of 'means of grace' to all within its reach, rather than a carefully sifted collection of converted persons.

In this debate, within Protestantism, between the national or potentially national churches and the 'sectaries', the early Presbyterians were emphatically on the side of the former. In Scotland, the reformed national establishment was itself Presbyterian. Across the border, the Presbyterians remained within the Church of England, while seeking its further reformation along lines more congenial to them. In the seventeenth century, under the Long Parliament, the English Presbyterians were given a qualified opportunity to carry out their plans, with Scottish advice and assistance; but their ascendancy did not last for long, and with the return of the Stuarts they were required to declare their previous actions illegal. Many ministers, failing to make this abjuration, were ejected from their parishes. What they were least able to stomach was the demand that those of them who had been ordained to the ministry, during the Common-

wealth, in the Presbyterian fashion, by a court of their fellow-ministers, should be ordained again by bishops. This was a different matter altogether from undertaking—as foreign Presbyterians entering the Church of England had previously done—to submit to episcopal government, and to work in a Church where ordinations were episcopal. The theory behind the demand, so far as there was any, does not appear to have been the modern Anglo-Catholic one that Presbyterian ordination does not make a man a minister at all, but only that it had not made these men ministers of the Church of England (in Scotland, though the Stuarts introduced bishops there too, there was no re-ordination of the parish clergy). To Presbyterian minds this was, as it still is, unpardonable muddle-headedness. There is no such thing as ordination to the ministry of the Church of England; for there is only one ministry to which a man can be ordained, as there is only one Church into which a man can be baptized, the Christian; though in the exercise of his ministerial functions he may be confined, temporarily or permanently, to a particular limited field. During their own ascendancy Presbyterians had refused on these grounds to demand—or, indeed, to permit—the re-ordination of Episcopalians or even Roman Catholics, the recognition of whose orders was among their points of difference from the Independents or Congregationalists.

Even when, a few years after this ejection, English dissenters were permitted to set up meeting places of their own, the Presbyterians among them were prevented by their own principles from availing themselves of this liberty as eagerly as the Congregationalists and Baptists did. Since a 'Presbyterian Church', in the sense of a separately organized denomination, was something of a contradiction in terms, they were in no haste to set about creating one, and preferred to remain simply 'non-conformists', that is, non-conforming ministers and members of the Church of England, to which they did not deny that title, despite their treatment at the hands of those whom they called, not 'Anglicans', as if they belonged to a different Church, but 'conformists'.

In Scotland, Presbyterianism was restored by William of Orange, but under Queen Anne there was one English institution which was again imposed on an unwilling Church of Scotland—not episcopacy, but patronage. This did not touch

the question, on which Presbyterians could not and cannot compromise, as to who should be recognized as Christian ministers; nor even the less fundamental question—on which, nevertheless, episcopal misrule had made Scotsmen feel very strongly—as to what method of perpetuating their order should be employed by the clergy in a given place and period. It was a question merely of how ministers should be selected to take up a particular clerical post, presentation by patrons being substituted at this point for the popular election which Presbyterians have generally preferred. Another question involved was the State's right to take any hand in this matter at all, particularly since the Church of Scotland had been guaranteed freedom from interference with its form of government in the Act of Union between England and Scotland a few years previously. The Church protested, but did not sever its tie with the State, which, after all, still left in the hands of the church courts the power to decide whether a candidate for ordination was qualified for it, though it compelled them to make trial of the qualifications of any candidate presented by a patron, and if he was found qualified, to ordain him and induct him to the benefice. Many Scotsmen, nevertheless, felt sufficiently strongly on the subject to leave the Establishment, and the number of these increased enormously in the latter half of the century, when the 'Moderate' party who then dominated the Church came to operate the law of patronage with sycophantic enthusiasm.

The Moderates considered themselves absolved from all responsibility to attempt to meet popular wishes, by the freedom to join other bodies which the State granted to anyone who was dissatisfied with the existing Establishment. They echoed the sectarian slogan with which the Church of England had repulsed Nonconformist overtures at the accession of William of Orange—'Better a schism without the Church than a faction within it.' This attitude had its inevitable consequences, and by the early part of the nineteenth century dissenters formed a powerful force in public life on both sides of the border, and many of them—some who had always done so, and some, including many Presbyterians, who previously had not—were raising the demand that the national churches be disestablished. They were joined by the increasingly influential *laissez-faire* economists, who argued that governmental assistance was as

harmful to the efficient production and distribution of religion as it was to that of any other commodity. In this situation, Thomas Chalmers came to the fore as an eager and able defender of both the northern and southern establishments.

There was no question at this date of arguing that the State had a duty to compel its citizens to participate in the religious observances of the National Church, and still less of arguing that it should make the organization of rival denominations illegal. Chalmers appealed rather to the *right* of all citizens to the services of the Christian ministry, whether they could afford to pay for such services personally or not, and whether or not they were regular and enthusiastic churchgoers. He opposed an 'aggressive' to an 'attractive' ministry, and a 'territorial' to a 'congregational' organization of the Church. A minister should give his attention, not only to the congregation or group which his gifts might attract to him, but to the entire population of an area specifically assigned to him. The Church's mission was to the world—Chalmers was not behindhand in enthusiasm for foreign missions—but that meant not only to all men in general but to every man in particular; and in every nation there should be no area without a minister, and no minister without an assigned field of work. To discharge such responsibilities effectively a church needed to be well endowed, and the State should take just enough interest in its doings to see that its territorial mission was faithfully carried out. The argument at its concluding point presupposed—as Chalmers was entitled to presuppose—a nation in which, although there might be much religious indifference, there was no alternative to Christianity being put forward by any considerable proportion of those actively interested in the subject.

To the economists, Chalmers replied that the only commodities which could be safely left to the working of the law of supply and demand were those for which men's demands were a true measure of their need. With education and religion, the less a man had of them—the greater, that is to say, his need of them—the less he cared about them; and here free trade was out of place. To those who asked *what* Church the State should entrust with the religious care of the nation, his answer was that it did not greatly matter, so long as it was Christian and Protestant. Rome was out

of the question for political reasons; but for the rest, dissenters should be grateful (as the English Presbyterians had been even after their ejection) that there *was* a Christian institution commissioned and assisted to minister to multitudes whom their own merely 'attractive' ministry could not reach. They should, moreover, reconsider the grounds of their dissent, and see if they could not reunite with the National Church in the performance of its national task.

Chalmers was not, however, content to address this advice to the dissenters. He sought also to make his own National Church more worthy of his apology for it. There had been considerable changes in the distribution of the population since the country had originally been divided into parishes just as there had been since it had been divided into electorates; particularly, of course, in areas affected by the Industrial Revolution. The result was that in some places there were vast agglomerations of people served in theory by a single minister, and in practice entirely neglected, while elsewhere there were ministers with nothing to do. Parish boundaries badly needed re-drawing. Further, a Church whose mission was to the entire population should not alienate any considerable section of it by obstinacy on minor matters. In their opposition to patronage, the dissenters should be met at least half-way; particularly since patronage reflected a social structure which an increasingly widening political franchise seemed to be bringing to an end.

In arguing for the creation of new parishes and for some change in the law of patronage, Chalmers was able to carry the majority in the Church of Scotland with him, the Moderates being now outnumbered by their 'Evangelical' opponents; but these matters also concerned the State, which for various reasons was reluctant to authorize reforms. The Tories were content with the status quo, and the Whigs were influenced by the dissenters, who did not wish to see any increase in the Establishment's efficiency; and in any case Scottish religion was an irritating mystery to the Parliament in London. The Church did what it could on its own, and indeed, was led in its enthusiasm to do more than it could on its own. It not only erected auxiliary chapels in areas which had become too populous to be catered for by the old parish churches, but, by the Chapel Act of 1834, gave their ministers seats in the ecclesiastical courts; and by the Veto Act of the same year, it empowered the majority

of communicants in a parish to override the patron's choice in the appointment of a minister.

Many of the clergy, by no means all of them Moderates, had their misgivings about these two measures, especially the Veto. That enactment meant that a majority of communicants in a parish could prevent a candidate's being taken on trial by the church courts, with a view to his ordination and induction if qualified, simply by objecting to it, without giving any reasons for their objection—that is, without making any specific charges against the man, into which a full and fair inquiry could be made. 'I do not like thee, Dr Fell', was enough. In defending this feature of the act, Chalmers argued that people of simple piety, particularly among the Scottish peasantry, had a capacity for immediately sensing grave deficiencies in spirituality which they could not describe in words. There was a tang of fanaticism about this argument which was offensive to the more sober sort of Presbyterians, and which was soon to manifest itself in other ways. The investing of the patron with the right to speak for the whole parish had no doubt become an anachronism, even in the many cases in which the patrons were not private persons but public bodies; but in his advocacy of this new alternative, Chalmers was coming close to the 'congregational' view that a minister's work lay primarily with those whom his gifts could 'attract' to him. He was certainly suggesting that the authority which a minister had to speak to men in God's name was derived from his personal gifts and graces—his power to impress people—rather than from the commission given to him at his ordination and induction.

Then the legality of the measure, as an unsanctioned modification of the law of patronage (though one put forward to begin with as a mere 'interpretation' of it), was questioned both by those who thought the proper course, though not perhaps a very hopeful one, was to petition the legislature for the abolition of patronage, and by those who were well content with the law as it stood. When test cases were brought before the supreme Scottish civil court, the Court of Session, and taken from there to the House of Lords, it was established that neither the Chapel Act nor the Veto Act were measures which the ecclesiastical authorities were competent to bring into force without concurrent action by Parliament. The Assembly then took the extraordinary

course of proceeding as if the acts in question were still in force despite these legal findings, and went so far as to depose seven ministers for obeying one of the Court of Session's injunctions. By such action, the Church appeared to the Government to be claiming the right to alter the terms of its association with the State without the latter's consent. The Assembly argued that the Church's connection with the State was a purely financial arrangement—it was open to the State to deprive parishes in which the patron's choice had been disregarded, or new parishes created without government authority, of the benefit of State-administered endowments; but the Church had an inherent right to make any regulations it chose regarding such questions as who should occupy a given clerical post, and who should sit in ecclesiastical courts. The lawyers held that the Church's legal obligations extended further than this, and that these other matters also were to some extent fixed by the terms of its establishment.

There was, of course, one clear way of escape from this impasse. If the Government finally refused to accept the Assembly's view of the Church's obligations and liberties, the Assembly, or a majority of its members, could leave the Establishment in a body. Technically, even this would not have brought the tie between Church and State to an end. 'Even if every minister of the Church of Scotland had "gone out", and all the people too, that would not have been legal Disestablishment. It would only have been some twelve hundred vacancies in the State Church.' (P. Carnegie Simpson, *The Life of Principal Rainy*, Vol. I, p. 248). But unquestionably legal disestablishment would have followed such action; and for this course the more headstrong of the reforming party began to prepare. Among them, despite his enthusiasm for establishments, was Chalmers. He failed, however, to persuade a majority in the Church to follow him as far as this; for even apart from those who concurred in the interpretation of the constitution given by the civil courts, or who in any case regarded their verdict on such a point as final, there were those who felt that the issues involved were not of such moment as to warrant jettisoning the assistance which, as Chalmers himself had argued, a State connection alone could give to the discharge of the Church's responsibility to the nation. Reforming the Establishment was one thing; abandoning it, particularly when

that might mean its abolition, quite another. So the Church did not in effect disestablish itself; there was only, in 1843, another secession. Nevertheless, when it came, its extent far exceeded anything anticipated by the Government, which had completely failed to understand how urgent was the need for framing legislation which would ease the position. Of the twelve hundred and three ministers of the Church of Scotland, no less than four hundred and seventy-four, including all the Church's missionaries but one, abandoned their livings to form the new Free Church.

These men took a peculiar pride in the fact that they had *not* been 'ejected', but had *walked out*. The story of their departure in a body from the Assembly of 1843, amid the applause of the Edinburgh populace, was told and re-told; and pictures of it, and of the new Assembly which they constituted immediately afterwards, still adorn many Otago walls (one of them forms the frontispiece of Professor Collie's centennial volume, *The Story of the Otago Free Church Settlement, 1848–1948*). Their strongly territorial view of the Church did not lead them, as it had led the earlier English Presbyterians, to make every effort to avoid embarrassing the parish ministers, and to act as far as possible as their unofficial colleagues. It meant, rather, an intensification of their activity in developing a rival organization. They had none of the scruples about calling that organization a 'Church' which had weighed not only with the Presbyterian element in English Nonconformity but also with the important group of earlier seceders in Scotland who had begun by forming what they modestly termed a 'Relief Presbytery'. On the contrary, in polemics of the period immediately after the Disruption, pointed contrasts were drawn between the 'Free *Church*' and the 'Bond Establishment'. They thought of their exodus not as a disruption or fission *in* the Church of Scotland but as a disruption *of* the Church of Scotland from its tie with the State. In a Pastoral Address issued by their Assembly in 1845 they declared that what had happened two years before was that 'the Church of their Fathers' had 'ceased to be the Endowed, that she might continue to be the Free, Church of Scotland'. The seceding leaders took the line that 'the idea of the residuary Establishment doing anything valuable for the salvation of souls was simply ridiculous', and that they should therefore 'proceed substantially on the theory

that provision for ordinances by it was not to be taken into account at all'. Their newspaper, edited by the geologist Hugh Miller, called upon the people of Scotland in every place to 'regard the parish minister as the one excommunicated man of the district, the man with whom no one is to join in prayer, whose church is to be avoided as an impure and unholy place'. Chalmers's defence of religious establishments was certainly bearing strange fruit.

This violence did not last; but its very abatement involved a weakening of the territorialism of the seceders. They came at length to regard the Establishment as *a* Church, though not as *the* Church of Scotland. The territorial idea is compatible with the existence of 'conforming' and 'nonconforming' elements in a single rather loosely defined National Church; and it is also compatible with the existence of a disestablished national Church side by side with an Establishment that is nothing of the kind. The latter, as we have seen, was the original Free Church description of the Scottish situation; it was also the Scottish Episcopalian description of it; though of course these two groups of dissenters identified the 'disestablished national Church' in different ways. But the recognition, by the same people, of two separately organized bodies in the same area as both 'Churches', is only possible if ecclesiastical organization is put on some other basis than the territorial. As this attitude became general in the Free Church, its position approximated to that of the United Presbyterian Church, a body formed in 1847 by the union of the main heirs of the eighteenth century anti-patronage secessions; and in 1900 the greater part of the Free Church amalgamated with this body to form the United Free Church.

In the meantime, changes had also taken place on the other side. Within the Establishment, pressure for reform, though by strictly constitutional methods, had again made itself felt. A National Church, said Norman Macleod in 1870, quite in the spirit of the earlier Chalmers, 'exists, not for the sake of the clergy, but for the sake of the country. The people do not thus belong to the Church, but the Church to the people . . . The office-bearers of the National Church are trustees of a property which is theirs only in so far as they regard it as a common boon, which all citizens are entitled to share . . . We are thus bound, as far as is consistent with our existence as a Christian Church, to

include within it as many, and to exclude from it as few as possible, of our countrymen. And in order to do this, we should weigh their conscientious convictions whether as to government, forms of worship, or doctrines of minor importance, in the light of that true Christian charity, which is at once the highest form of freedom and of restraint.' On these grounds the Church pressed for, and obtained from the Government in 1874, the abolition of patronage.

The first reaction of the Free Church, however, was indignation at a step designed to draw away its own ministers and members. For the demand of the older Nonconformists that their ministers be recognized as ministers of the one Church, and that the conditions of service in official parishes be made such as they could conform to, Free Churchmen were now substituting the demand that the title of 'a Church' be accorded to their denomination. This transformation of the claims of Presbyterianism had already taken place in some parts of the New World, where there were a number of denominations, but no Establishment, and, there being nothing to conform to, no Nonconformity either. And in Scotland, the Free Church got what it wanted. After the Established Assembly had persuaded the Government in 1921 to grant it a very ample liberty in the management of ecclesiastical affairs, it amalgamated with that of the United Free Church in 1929, the union taking place as an exercise of the liberty, asserted on its own behalf by the United Free Church in 1905, and secured to the Church of Scotland by the act of 1921, of 'uniting with other Churches'.

'Other Churches'—that was how the uniting bodies had come to speak of one another, even regarding it as a form of courtesy to do so. The present Archbishop of Canterbury showed a keener ear for the genuine accent of territorialism when he said, not long after his enthronement, that reunion in England, when it came, would not be reunion *with* the Church of England, but reunion *of* the Church of England. This was how the older Nonconformists also spoke. In our own country we have still to discover the proper equivalent of this language.

CHARLES SPEAR

'IN TIME LIKE GLASS'

FROM A BOOK OF HOURS

Bearing white myrrh and incense, autumn melts
Through flower and fruit and combed blonde straw:
Thunder looms on the mountain forest-belts:
The winter firewood purrs beneath the saw.

Our garden scents upbillow like the veils
Of Solomon's Temple, shimmer in the rain,
And all is peace. Slowly the daylight fails,
And voice and lute bring back the stars again.

ANIMAE SUPERSTITI

Some leagues into that land I too have fared:
The diligence along the causeway sped,
While from the left a giant planet stared
Across the restless marsh with face of lead.

In number we were four: you, child, and I;
The swordsman next, who wore his mocking air
Of Papal Zouave, fencing master, spy,
And last the golliwog with vacant, saxe-blue stare.

Onward we whirled: you slept disturbed in mind,
And from your hand the English roses fell:
Europe by lamplight far behind,
We clove the white fog's shifting swell.

So for an hour, and then I must return,
And you, with your creatures, ply insensate flight.
Broken I stood beneath the frontier light,
Till through the endless marsh I could discern
No wheels, no sound, only the airs of night.

THE WATCHERS

Beneath the rampart, when the bending palm
Draws languid fingers through the opening bars
Of wind-borne ocean music, with pale stars
On lips and eyes, sit in a holy calm

The watchers of the dooms, and far away,
With orange fires and marbled stain of blood,
Sinks through the wrathful slanting of the flood
That citadel devoted by the birds of prey.

See! Towers alone remain, like jewels ablaze,
Points of a sinking crown. The watchers now
Draw back in haste, save one with troubled brow
Who seeks those coming through the rain and haze.

A LIFE

Beneath, like stretched blue satin lay the sea,
Shadowed with purple, and the guns behind
Roared and recoiled with flaming lips, while he
Perched in the gunpit, almost blind

With billowing smoke, held firm his white-capped line.
This fades, yet changes not, for the gazer in the glass
Sees Tashkand's fury, Kars with bursting mine,
And last the sign—, the death-birds in the Shipka Pass.

THE PRISONER

I walked along the winding road:
It was high summer: on one side
Behind pale foliage sinuously flowed
The hand-sown wheat in rustling pride.

Gray sprawling stone, before me towered the school:
I touched the chapel-corner through the hedge,
Traced dimly in the window's painted pool
Three mitres and the shield with rope and wedge.

Deep peace! yet there was panic terror shut inside:
The bronze bells rolled and reeled in flowing tide.
Against that shock time buckled to resist,
And no sound pierced the loneliness, no voices cried:
Only the great towers trembled in the pouring mist.

MEMORITER

Ovals of opal on dislustred seas,
Skyshine, and all that indolent afternoon
No clash of arms, no shouting on the breeze:
Only the reeds moaned soft or high their empty rune.

The paladins played chess and did not care,
The crocus pierced the turf with random dart.
Then twanged a cord. Through space, from Oultremer,
That other arrow veered towards your heart.

F. A. MAGUIRE

NO TRAVELLER RETURNS

The Express was crowded when it pulled up at the Junction. People bundled out, but even more seemed to bundle in. I climbed on quickly, but couldn't find a seat; they were all smothered with people and luggage and parcels. There wasn't a vacant one in the whole long train. I couldn't get off, I must go home, so there was nothing for it but to sit on the floor. There was plenty of space outside the first class carriages. I parked down with my rug and cushion and arranged my belongings. A young Air Force lad came along; he couldn't find a seat either, so decided to take to the floor too. He sat down, with his baggage, on the opposite side. The train whistled, and pulled out, with a heavy grunt, as though aware of its intolerable load.

The Airman offered cigarettes, and we began to smoke and yarn. ' I didn't mean to come by this train,' he told me. ' I was staying with my girl friend, but another pal of hers

turned up, so I decided to get out and leave them to it.' No fuss, just matter-of-fact about it. The long journey began to look more interesting.

Presently the door banged open and a Sailor came through. He stopped—we seemed to amuse him, sitting there, smoking and chatting. 'Who's giving this party anyway?' he enquired. He had the air of having been to a party himself, and fairly recently at that. 'The New Zealand Railways I think,' said the Airman.

'That's no good—we can't have that!' said the Sailor. 'Plenty of seats along in the second class—come along, I'll find seats for you.' Rather reluctantly, we got up—we'd been quite comfortable really. I'd taken off my shoes and was wearing soft slippers, and didn't want to change them again.

Now we began a gruelling route march that led through most of the swaying, speeding train. The Sailor led the way, carrying my rug and cushion; I followed, a shoe in each hand; the Airman came last. We crossed into the next carriage, and wove our way along the aisle, which presented severe hazards, people and luggage flowing over in all directions; men, women, kids, babies, parcels; we ploughed our way through them all. Definitely no vacant seats, scarcely even right-of-way. After several carriages like this, I turned to the Airman and said, 'I think he's taking us down the garden path.' 'I think so too,' he answered. But we went on, crossing swaying platforms, staggering down rocking corridors, until we came to another platform with a group of Boy Scouts in possession. 'Here, son,' says the Sailor, 'do your golden deed—find this lady a seat.' The largest Scout joined the procession (Sailor, Spinster, Airman, Scout), we stumbled through two more carriages, all equally sardine-packed.

'I think we'd better go back,' I said to the Airman. 'So do I,' he answered, so we turned and led the procession back again—Sailor, Spinster, Airman, Scout reversed. It was worse going back, like pressing against a fish-hook; the barbs were against us this time; all the people and their possessions stuck out more than ever. They began to laugh at us—the ones who had seats did. Suddenly the merry Sailor stopped beside a young man occupying a double seat. 'Is all this seat occupied?' he asked. 'No,' said the man sulkily. 'There you are, lady,' said my Sailor. 'It's yours.' The young man reluctantly moved over against the window, and I sat down.

My convoy moved on, and I lost sight of them forever.

I settled down as comfortably as I could in the small space. The young man sulked, hunched against the window, staring out at the fleeting country. He was going to have a cramped uncomfortable night, like the rest of us, because of a Sailor's quick eye. It would have been worse for him, though, if I had been O.S. instead of S.W.—as it was he had more than his share of living space.

Across the aisle a family heaved in crotchety turmoil; father, wife and her sister, and small boy of about 18 months. The mother, with one of those long, fair, stupid faces as pale and expressionless as an egg, sat on one side, with a pillow beside her for the child to lie on. He didn't want to lie down and sleep; how could he—hills and trees and sheep and cows were all rushing past his bedroom window, in a way he'd never seen before. He must look at this strange thing; he couldn't lie down and go to sleep now. The stupid parents didn't think of this; it was bedtime, he *must* lie down, he *must* go to sleep. The kid got up again, was put down; cried; was slapped; cried more and more. Father smacked him again; the cries grew louder, his struggles more determined. O man, I said, though no sound was heard, don't be such a fool, leave your kid alone, let him look about a bit, he'll tire soon enough. My mental message must have reached father; he left the kid alone; the family fidgetting ceased.

The night grew dark, the lights went on, the train bumped forward. Suddenly my companion forgot to sulk—he turned to me excitedly; 'Look at the bush fires out there—these must be the big fires spreading across from Taupo!' We could see a rose-red glare, like a motionless aurora australis.

Now we began to talk of this and that. The lights were put out one by one. Comparative calm came upon us, we tried to sleep. 'May I use you for a pillow?' asked my companion, calmly putting his head on my shoulder before I could think of the answers. Well . . . O well, yes, I s'pose you can . . . turn about though . . . We slumbered . . . we slept.

There was a crashing jolt. 'That was a rough stop—rotten driver,' I muttered crossly to my companion. But I must have been very fast asleep, he had gone without my realizing it. We had pulled up at a station, some of the passengers were getting out. The woman with the child

was putting her things together; her husband and sister seemed to have gone, or had I only deamt them? She seemed to be alone now, and having difficulty with her things, and the kid, which was awake and cross. I helped her, getting out on the platform, lifting her luggage down. The night was now very dark and windy. Our carriage was well up the platform, away from the station buildings, which were but faintly lighted.

Behind me, lights shewed across a street. I could dimly see the buildings of the town spreading away into the distance. It was all very dark. When I turned again the woman and child had gone; the shadowy passing figures of other passengers had gone; the train itself had gone! All my belongings were in it; coat, cushion, rug, books; and, what worried me greatly, my sun-glasses. My bag too, with my comb, my ration book, my money.

I had nothing with me. I was alone, standing there in my slippers, in a wild, black, blowy night, in a strange place where I knew no one at all. A porter loomed up; I could see nothing but a vague blurry shape. I explained my predicament, anxiously urged him to help me, to wire or telephone to the next station to get someone to collect my things for me. I was in a fever of anxiety that they would be stolen, particularly my sun-glasses; I'd *never* get those back again! And here I was in this desolate spot, suddenly dumped down I knew not where. The porter didn't answer —he too was lost in the gloom.

I looked behind me again; but now the houses dimly seen, the little lights, the very station had gone. There was nothing but an endless plain, with the wind, rising and rain-pitted, howling over it in the dark, the dark . . .

As I peered about, darkness seemed to swallow up the plain entirely, the wind became more menacing—and there was no shelter to turn to—why, why was there no shelter?

But of course the rails would be near, they must lead to a station, I could get somewhere, find someone, if I followed the rails. No need to worry; the train didn't matter—silly to think of death because of the darkness. But I couldn't find the rails—they had gone too. It was uncanny—like being lost in a nightmare. And that's what this was, no doubt of it; terrifying, but it wouldn't last—nightmares always ended.

But if it didn't? If I couldn't go back? In sudden panic

I realized that the train, the station, all that I'd known as life, might be the real dream . . . But I mustn't worry about that now—I must keep a grip on myself. At least I could still think, keep moving; there must be somewhere to go—no need to panic, I couldn't just be nowhere.

I moved forward carefully, testing the way with my slippered feet. It was better to keep going—there must be a way ahead. Perhaps when the darkness lifted I wouldn't want to go back.

RUTH GILBERT

LAZARUS

I. BETROTHED TO LAZARUS

Music there was, but not of flute or bird,
And rain, but not from cloud,
And for those things which he has felt and heard
He mourns, but not aloud.

Light too there was, but not the light of day,
And through our alien noon
He walks aggrieved, as one that, gone away,
Is summoned back too soon.

Our truths to him are strangely marred with lies,
Our spring-times chill with frost:
He looks on earth with unfamiliar eyes,
A Lazarus home, yet lost.

But what befell in that half-land of sleep
To change the mountain eagle to the dove
I cannot tell. I only know I weep,
For this is not my love.

II. THE SISTERS OF LAZARUS

THEY say he walked by Lethe unaware
And through its waters trailed rash finger-tips,
They say some feckless angel touched his lips
With coals of heaven, and left a madness there.

They say he looks askance on flower and girl
As if in some far, visionary place
He knew a brighter bloom, a fairer face—
They call him dreamer, idiot, and churl.

Some say he did not die, but only slept
The simple, happy slumber of a child,
But grief is not so easily beguiled:
We saw the stone, we know the tears we wept.

And if he speaks in words that are not plain,
If dull of wit we cannot understand,
Enough for us that we can touch his hand,
And see his face, and know him home again.

III. LAZARUS SPEAKS

I LOOKED on that whereon no man should look,
I heard the song not sung for mortal ear,
But for His voice who called me I forsook
The paths of light to walk the darkness here.

I saw the glory, and I felt the power,
Amazement leapt within me like a flame
And in my heart peace opened like a flower . . .
Then stricken, lost, I heard Him call my name,

And earth was back. The friends that once I had
Decried as dreams the revelations given,
Proclaimed me witless, moon-bewitched and mad—
But he is sane whose feet have walked in heaven.

They will not heed the wisdom I would teach,
Their laughter mocks the truest words I say,
The star of knowledge gleams beyond their reach
And from its shining they have turned away.

Yet these were naught: but when each day I see
My love's dark eyes estranged and bright with pain,
I cry to Him whose mercy wakened me
To speak once more, and bid me sleep again.

JAMES K. BAXTER

THE CAVE

In a hollow of the fields, where one would least
expect it,
Stark and suddenly this limestone buttress:
A tree whose roots are bound about the stones,
Broad-leaved, hides well that crevice at the base
That leads, one guesses, to the sunless kingdom
Where souls endure the ache of Proserpine.

Entering where no man, it seemed,
Had come before, I found a rivulet
Beyond the rock wall running in the dark.
Where it came from in the heart of the hill
No one could tell; alone
It ran like Time there in the dank silence.

I spoke once and my voice resounded
Among the many pillars. Further in
Were bones of sheep that strayed and died
In nether darkness, brown and water-worn.
The smell of earth was like a secret language
That dead men speak and we have long forgotten.

The whole weight of the hill hung over me;
Gladly I would have stayed there and been hidden
From every beast that moves beneath the sun,
From age's enmity and love's contagion:
But turned and climbed back to the barrier,
Pressed through and came to dazzling daylight out.

J. F. McDOUGALL

WHAT IMAGES RETURN

What seas what shores what grey rocks and what islands
What water lapping the bow
And scent of pine and the woodthrush singing through the fog
What images return
O my daughter. *T. S. Eliot*

LOOKING down the length of his sun-reddened body, his head cradled in the crook of his arm, he watched the runnels of sand trickling down the valleys of his feet, between the veins and tendons which stood up like weals. From that angle his toes seemed like jagged mountains, rearing above the coral reef, above the ultramarine sea, above the horizon, forming fantastic islands.

How impossible, he thought, to dissociate the present from the memory of things past. Shadows from the past fell across every present incident. The soft warm comfort of the sand brought back days in childhood, the loneliness of childhood and the neurotic desire to return to the innocence of those days.

Beside him, snuggling into the sand like a fat lazy rabbit in straw, Irwin sighed and grunted as he changed his position.

He was watching through sleepy eyes the natives further along the beach, bathing themselves and their children and rolling in the sand to dry. Covered with the coarse, white coral sand they danced and played, like fantastic straw dolls, or a crowd of phantom witch-doctors. The old native women who presided priest-like over these sports, their lifeless breasts hanging like razor-strops against them, quickly pulled the thin shapeless mission frocks over the still wet bodies of the young girls.

'In your semi-drunken stupor last night you said something about there being no innocents, that we all shared in every sin that was committed.'

'The most undrunken thought I've ever had.'

Irwin gave one of his ridiculous throaty laughs, his flabby,

hairy stomach shaking. ' Bloody Calvinist. But I'm thinking, if I'm to partially sin in the eventual seduction of those girls, why shouldn't I anticipate it, why not take the whole sin and enjoy it? Isn't that logical? '

' The logic of an Irishman brought up in a Scotch orphanage.'

' And can I ever change that? '

' It's in your Army record. That's the law of God here.'

' Then,' he grunted, ' let me live out its logic.'

' That's as good a bloody excuse as any. But don't quote me as the corrupter of your morality. If I remember clearly . . .'

' Could you? '

' . . . I was saying that the modern saint is also a bloody murderer.'

' I remember, God as the corrupter of humanity.'

' That either you fight, kill and lead others to their death, or you refuse to fight and acquiesce in the slaughter of the more-or-less innocent. The beauty of it is, whatever you do you are stained with blood.'

' Hence, no atheists in fox-holes. We all cry ' mea culpa, mea maxima culpa ' and bayonet them with remorse. Not when I see the Banzai charge, if I ever do.'

' It's only in drink and dreams, I suppose, one remembers the widow in Cologne who ran up to turn the gas off when the bomb fell, or the blood of your neighbour, the stockbroker, caught in his bath by a bomber you might have shot down.'

' Widows and stockbrokers. You're a bloody sentimentalist talking blasphemous theology.'

Irwin sighed again and settled more cosily into the sand.

Robert watched him with distaste. He had shared the same native hut with him now for six months, learning the intimate details of his life. He knew his mannerisms until they revolted him; the way his stomach shook when he laughed, his habit of brushing his few thin hairs across his bald, red and mottled head. Watching them he was sometimes filled with a stupid burning fury against him. But he realized he was a fool, that he was merely transferring to these small, recognizable and embodied things his resentment and fury against the whole unreality of this forced existence. It was only part of his protest against participation in a war in which he only half believed.

He realized, too, that Irwin was freer than he was, freer because of his ability to live wholly in the present. Not that Irwin was insensible to the things *he* revolted against, but because he was more reconciled to corruption. He, Robert, was only a bloody Colonial, one of Goebbels's 'poor country boys' who did not understand.

He looked out again to sea. The sheet of unbroken deep blue was like something that did not belong. It seemed to be lifted above the beach and reef and hang like a huge brilliant smudge above the scene.

At the corner of his eye the long curved and slender coconut palms broke its continuity. Otherwise it was unbroken, even by waves. Looked at too long it blurred in the heat, which pressed down on them like soft heated wool.

He ran his eyes along the outer fringe of the reef. Here and there bleached timber leaned or bobbed against its gleaming black.

Suddenly he sat up. On the inner side of the reef, close to a narrow channel, where the bigger waves broke through, something round and black, like a bloated sheep, was floating, patting softly against the rocks.

Trickles of hot sweat ran down his forehead into his eyes and for a moment he could not see. He brushed them away with the back of his hand, and narrowing his eyes against the glare of the sun on sand and water, he tried to bring the object closer out of the rest of his field of vision. But it remained tantalizingly vague and indistinct, a black blob of substance, light and buoyant, which seemed somehow human.

'What's that out there? Look, by the reef.'

'Eh?' Irwin spoke slowly in that patient bored voice which infuriated Robert.

'See, over there by the channel, like a—a small whale.'

'Ah, an' be gorra, I see it.' He dropped into the assumed Irish brogue. 'Whale? That's a very miniature Moby Dick.' He was sitting up now, patting the sweat off his body with a thin hard Army towel.

The natives had moved further along the beach, hunting for shells and poking in the pools in the reef for fish.

'Let's go.' It was some two hundred yards to the channel and they had to scramble over the jagged and sharp shelves of the reef and plunge through the frequent pools before they reached it. Plump as he was Irwin was extraordinarily

nimble on his feet, his legs disproportionately thin for his well-padded body, giving him the appearance of a top, and he was right behind Robert as panting they reached the shelf of rock opposite to where it floated.

The body was swollen until its features were unrecognizable, swollen with the waters of the oceans of the world, waters which had lapped the shores of coral, mouths of caves, cliffs of rock, of ice and of lagoons. Somehow it had escaped the marauding mouths of fishes. Only one leg had been attacked and its bones laid bare from the knee down. It was male, but it was impossible to tell of what race for the water had reduced the skin to a bloated neutral black. It reminded Robert of a drowned sheep.

For a moment neither of them spoke, as they watched this body of ally, foe or friend quietly, serenely bobbing in the pool.

Irwin silently crossed himself and muttered a few words from the mass—Agnus dei qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem—then said with a twitter, 'Alas, poor Yorick', seeming to feel that no ritual chant he knew would argue away the corruption of this flesh, no magic legend evoke a cleansed spirit from the blackness of this vessel.

Robert did not reply. Carefully he reached out his foot and pushed the body with his toe, then withdrew in horror from the cold spongy touch of the flesh.

The native women had already gathered in a still silent crowd at the shore. Their laughter had died away like a breeze that precedes rain, and legs gangling, arms akimbo, they waited to see what these white men would do.

'We'd better get it ashore,' Robert said suddenly, in a voice he did not recognize as his own.

'Blast his intrusion,' said Irwin, but feeling that something must be done in front of these women, he ran, muttering blasphemies, back to the beach for his ground-sheet.

Robert tried to look away but the bobbing figure in the water held him fascinated. The insolently undulating shape and the black crowd of staring unmoving women on the shore were an intimation of something at which he was a foreigner, an intruder.

Suddenly he was aware of the incongruity of this whole adventure. What was he doing here among these strange people, this strange culture? What dark caves had they rudely prized open with their bayonets? And this body,

perhaps the escaped victim of some cabalistic religious rite, what black mysterious world was it a sign from? What tunnels of dark caverns opened beyond it, leading into who knows what strange passages? The heat and wind beating around him seemed for the moment to pulse with forces unknown and alien to his spirit.

From the water the bloated lips of the face with their Buddha-like half-smile, with water, foam and green weed around them, seemed to possess a serene yet bitter wisdom, that mocked his green innocence and gave the face a mastery over the living.

In spite of the heat he shivered and stepped higher on the coral rock.

Irwin returned with his ground-sheet under one arm. ' Poor bastard,' he said, ' Jap, Aussie, New Zealander, Yank, Zombie, whatever he is. We'll give him a Christian burial.'

Robert did not speak for a moment, then he said, ' Let the natives bury him.'

' What the hell,' said Irwin. ' He's lost uniform and meat-ticket but he might be one of ours.'

' Let the natives bury him,' Robert said angrily.

Irwin looked at him coolly for a moment. ' All right, boy, if you feel strongly about it. But we'll have to report it.'

' We needn't. We can come back later and see they have buried him.'

' O.K. then, I'm just as pleased. Bugger his rotten flesh, he's spoilt a pleasant afternoon for me.'

With great care they slipped the ground-sheet under the body, Robert with delicacy and a slight feeling of nausea avoiding the touch of the flesh.

Slipping and stumbling on the wet sharp rock they carried it back to the beach. The women moved away as they came ashore and stood, huddled together, about ten yards away as they laid it down at the foot of the mangrove.

' Hey, mamma,' Irwin called to the eldest. ' You go tell big man George bury this boy deep . . . Yes, you. Go! '

The woman turned to her companions, muttered excitedly to them, then two of them went off to the village.

' And see you bury him deep. No throwing earth over him,' Irwin called after them. ' We come back tomorrow and see.'

Robert was still staring hard at the body, his eyes nar-

rowed, his jaw set hard, as if he were fighting the force of its will.

'Come on,' Irwin said. 'Let's get back. This beach stinks.'

As they moved away the women shuffled towards the body. Pulling on their shorts and boots they could see them jostling one another as they peered and jabbered at it. Then suddenly they became quiet and squatted down in a circle round it.

Softly and with infinite tenderness they began their keening over the rotting flesh of this man of unknown race, age or army, humble and reverent before death, which they understood.

Robert was still silent, preoccupied.

Irwin looked at him quizzically, as mechanically lacing his boots, he stared over the reef to the sea.

'Haven't you seen a dead man before?' he asked.

With a start Robert turned to him in anger, then bit his lip and said quietly, 'Oh, yes, I've seen one before.' He quickly finished lacing his boots and stood up.

Entering the path through the dry and rotting jungle, they could hear the thin, clear, convent-trained voice of a native girl, rising above the low chant of the others. The words were indistinguishable and unknown. Unknown words, but what did it matter; they were from another world than theirs yet awakened echoes in some hitherto unexplored caverns of their minds.

Wore a ring upon my hand
Had pearls and rubies too;
Counted mountains as my land
And woods, where diamonds grew.

Oh Lord, I have loved the beauty of thy house . . . the hot nights and the long darkness . . . the day of sunshine and the day of rain . . . the fall of leaves, trees rotting in the swamp . . .

Their boots clanked on the rocks as they climbed up from the beach.

Walking back now, through the intricate tracery of the jungle, crushing mimosa and sodden mould beneath their feet, breathing the hibiscus laden air, the sun seemed alien, the trees and flowers antagonistic. The rustle of their steps among the grass and creeper was an evocation of ghosts—

bitter, strange ghosts, whose mysterious wisdom mocked these aliens, these strangers.

Anyway, Robert thought, I'm a little wiser for it, a little less the poor country boy, a little more able to tolerate Irwin.

When the path broadened and they were able to walk together, Irwin turned to him and after a glance, said, 'Listen, Bob, I know this affair has upset you. There are some things here we can't understand because we don't belong. But—*courage mon brave.*'

Remembering his laugh, Robert was silent. He had not had time yet to sort out the significance of the whole incident, to absorb it into his way of feeling.

Searching for words with which to answer, he found himself quoting the lines,

> '"Gentlemen of the Civil Guard:
> Here we have the same old story.
> Here died four Romans,
> And five Carthaginians."

I guess,' he said, 'that's all it means.'

COMMENTARIES

MR KERRIDGE TRIES CULTURE

1 R. A. K. MASON

An old print, depicting Auckland about a decade after its foundation, shows three theatres in the little settlement.

Nearly a century later, at an army camp near Auckland, two officers—Jim Swan and Dick Messenger—organized the building of a theatre out of odd bits and pieces. Of the many young soldiers who attended, most had never seen a play before; the very idea of it had to be explained to them, starting off in terms of the cinema. So effectively has the living theatre been submerged by the cinema.

Until well into this century, almost any theatrical effort

worth a damn—and they included many fine shows—was sure of sound support throughout New Zealand. Whether it was amateur or professional, local or visiting, the welcome was worth while.

The films came, first in small patrols, then in jackbooted regiments, backed by the world's big money. The drama was driven underground.

Needless to say, there is no technical reason why good cinema and good drama should not flourish side by side, each in its own sphere and each reinforcing the other. There is no technical reason, but there can be reasons based on the economic and social structure. This has been the case with us. The cinema has become Big Business, the drama has become nobody's business.

Now, at their best, films clearly cannot be a satisfactory substitute for plays. The drama, more than any other art, calls for popular stimulation, for co-operation between artists, technicians, audience and the whole community, perpetually re-creating a centre of energy, which is at once a recipient and source of social stimulus. And that is not the job of the cinema at its best.

We, of course, have had very little of it at its best. The general level of the canned stuff shipped to us has never been high and now grows daily lousier, as the American cultural level sinks steadily lower and Britain becomes steadily more subservient.

For all the cinema's overshadowing, however, the art of the theatre has managed to continue a life of its own in New Zealand. This has been most manifest in the amateur societies, small in themselves but making a substantial total throughout the country, and showing a surprisingly high level of ability, despite their difficulties and isolation.

The question that has concerned many thoughts is—if so much interest and ability already exists, can they not be given leadership on a higher level?

As the art of the theatre, to reach fulfilment, requires long training and arduous application, the question becomes, more precisely—cannot a permanent theatre, with training facilities, be established, attracting not only those already interested but also wider circles? (Such an organization would not, of course, be antagonistic to amateur development, but complementary to it.) State theatre, municipal theatre, national theatre run by its members, people's

theatre . . . many attempts were made and are being made by people of genuine and disinterested enthusiasm.

But the post-war prospect also appeared to have possibilities from the purely financial viewpoint. Much as Bismarck swaggered in to do the job of German unity where the Liberals had not succeeded, so Kerridge and Co. came in to do the job of establishing a permanent theatre—as heavily, if hardly as scientifically, as Bismarck. And the Kerridge interests are not only big local business, they are tied up with the ramifications of J. Arthur Rank and his attempts at a Kultur Kartel in the entertainment industry.

What were the dominant motives, if one can speak of motives in connection with men who seem to move so much in the atmosphere of automatism? As well as the immediate box-office, they probably had an eye to the chanciness of film supplies in the near future, the desirability of showing a concession to culture, the possibilities of moving further towards monopoly.

The first moves showed the finest flowering of that stupidity which the businessman, like the bureaucrat, shows most particularly when dealing with the arts. Aware only that there was gold in them thar hills, the Big Shots blundered in with a collection of hodge-podge machinery and proceeded to sink shafts at random.

To drop a metaphor, a producer, four actors and three actresses were signed up on contract in England and brought to Auckland, where reinforcements were picked up locally. (Today, the full-time members of the company number seventeen—a producer, six actors, seven actresses, a prop. man, an electrician and a stage hand.) An old building was hastily converted back from a picture show to a theatre. It may have been the only choice, but unfortunately it is far too big for much more than the blood-and-thunder stuff in which it specialized in the old days. A show was rushed on; it was called *Fools Rush In*.

The first night had, among the obviously invited, the Mayor, a full-blown admiral (or he may have been a rear- or a vice-) and the entire diplomatic corps. It may have been a success for those interested in the city's high society; to those who had expected a first-rate play, it was just a flop. Apart from one or two players, nothing about it was as good as a decent local amateur effort. Yet—and this was the particularly sore point—the publicity had continually emphasized what

theatrical revelations were going to be seen. Choice of play, lighting, setting, costuming and general production were commonplace; certainly there were difficulties, but they could not excuse the lack of any vital spark which might ultimately be hoped to blaze up. The players had had little opportunity to rehearse and learn to co-operate. Whatever the reasons, the standard of acting as it appeared was not high; only one person, Molly Raynor, really showed us something.

Those who wanted to see the development of really good theatre had had certain reservations from the start. They were particularly cagey over the fact that the Kerridge interests inevitably seem to work towards monopoly and extinction of anything that might ever become opposition. (It is stated, for instance, that they have pretty well all the little country halls tied up.)

And those interested in the drama had been put off by the pretentious publicity, together with the choice of name, the *New Zealand Theatre,* rather clumsily designed to capitalize on the movement to establish a national theatre.

Still, even a reasonably promising start would have aroused a measure of enthusiasm in such people. After the first night, they could go again only in a spirit of dogged hope. Subsequent plays certainly showed some improvement, mainly in the development of unity among the players. But nothing at all has been done to redeem the promise of at least some good plays. Nor did general presentation show any improvement until the sixth show, when the set was designed by Sam Williams.

The *New Zealand Theatre* has now been going about four months and is on its sixth show at the Playhouse; it will present one more there, then go on a five month tour with part of its repertory.

The present achievements of the *New Zealand Theatre*—and this will be approximately the position still in six months, after its tour—are these. It has built up an organization which includes some good players, but is based on mediocre methods of presentation. It has built up sufficient support to give it a fair prospect of permanence, provided it continues to give its audience current light comedies and mild thrillers, which they have come to expect. In other words, quite a fair sort of commercial company, functioning reasonably well within its limitations.

And that is quite O.K. and worthy of support—so long as it is clearly understood that those limitations exist and so long as the company is not used by its backers to block other, and better efforts. (Oh yes, we have seen that happen before, too.)

As a contribution to serious drama, to the development of a national theatre, the *New Zealand Theatre* can show nothing so far and does not appear likely ever to show anything. (It should be made perfectly clear that this does not refer to individual members, some of whom may personally have much to contribute—under different auspices.)

For the prospects of a genuine national theatre, and those prospects appear bright today, we must turn our eyes away from any move instituted by the Big Money and back to those individuals, organizations and public bodies to whom we looked before Mr Kerridge distracted our gaze.

2 *J. G. A. POCOCK*

The Pasadena Players, an American company under a New Zealand director, Mr G. H. Grimsdale, came to Christchurch in October. They are a group of young players from the Pasadena Playhouse, the well-known centre of training, repertory and experiment near Los Angeles, but theirs is not an enterprise of the Playhouse; Mr Grimsdale formed the company with the backing of Mr Kerridge.

The company has in fact become an experiment by the Kerridge organization in the creation of a professional theatre in New Zealand. It is apparently intended that it shall have the same function in the South Island as Mr Kerridge's other company, now playing in Auckland, in the North Island; that it shall establish itself as a going concern and remain permanently in New Zealand, adding New Zealand actors to its strength and giving local amateurs parts in its productions. It is claimed for it repeatedly and explicitly that it will become a rooted feature of the South Island scene: a permanent theatre, presenting plays of a high standard and taking a leading part in the development of drama in New Zealand. The term ' National Theatre ', as popularly used here, is vague, and the company's publicity has wisely avoided it; but it has promised the public what

the public has in mind, a permanent theatre differentiated by a sense of artistic and public responsibility from the purely commercial ventures of grisly familiarity.

'And so, at last,' says a widely distributed brochure, 'the professional theatre is a fact in New Zealand, dedicated to the entertainment and service of the people . . . Only when the people themselves accept the responsibility of supporting and constructively criticizing the work which has been so willingly undertaken by this theatre, will our country become culturally articulate.'

Between October and December, when the infantile paralysis epidemic caused the temporary suspension of its season. the company presented three plays. These were: a bad blank verse translation of Sem Benelli's *The Jest*, a pseudo-Renaissance tragedy dating from about 1910, whose author seems to have believed that the heaping of death upon fornication and of madness upon death can be a substitute for insight, power and reality in the writing; *Separate Rooms*, a New York farce which provided a series of easy belly-laughs, but had no claim to anything that could be called humour; and *Ten-Minute Alibi*, an English melodrama exciting in its technical ingenuity, but in characterization or any sort of conviction nothing more than juvenile. The play whose presentation was postponed was *Charley's Aunt*.

These plays could, and did, appeal to two classes of spectators only: the inveterately stage-struck who could not believe that the productions of a professional company could be other than good, and that large class who go to all entertainments grimly determined to be entertained, and greet any sort of criticism with undisguised resentment.

The Pasadena Players had an opportunity to do something valuable and lasting. They started with the interest and sympathy of a not insignificant amateur movement clearly on their side, though their advance publicity was not especially good. There is not much, so far, that can mitigate a failure to achieve anything. They have not given the development of the theatre in Christchurch the lead it badly needed; nor do they yet command a steady public even for the fare they are presenting. It may be important, now that the theatre in New Zealand is struggling for some kind of identity, to know what has happened and why.

It seems that those responsible for the company's policy suffered from a twofold and inconsistent delusion: first,

that theatrical taste in Christchurch was utterly unformed; second, that in spite of this any play of quality, requiring some effort of perception on the part of the audience, must inevitably fail unless presented by players established and familiar to the public. They appear actually to have supposed that it was useless to open with a 'good' play, because 'good' plays could not succeed until the players were known; so that they must present plays of an easy, popular, drawing kind until the company was known and financially secure, when the dread experiment of putting on a 'good' play might be adventured. There are traces of a third misapprehension: that *The Jest*, if not actually a 'good' play—that sure certificate of failure—was at least a fairly 'good' one, and could be used to test the public reaction; if it was a box-office failure, it could be logically deduced that a public which did not like Benelli would not like Shakespeare. (A fortiori; both wrote tragedies in blank verse.) *The Jest* did fail at the box-office, and we have probably not heard the last of this argument.

This does appear, as far as it can be inferred, to have been the policy with which the Pasadena Players set out. In the first place there is this to be said about it. It reflects the fatally inverted philosophy of the commercial entertainer; the quite explicit assumption that a good play, a play of quality, which stimulates or challenges its audience, no matter how little, must fail unless the audience can be lulled into some sort of belief that the challenge is not being made. This idea is at first sight incredible, but it is so common among our professional entertainers that we must recognize it when, as now, it appears latent among well-meaning and sincere people. For it is not a crime to hold it (c'est pire qu'un crime . . .); it is usually the outcome of bitter experience of the persistent rejection of the good.

But the philosophy of the lowest common denominator must fail. Many artists and entrepreneurs have lowered their standards and presented the bad in hope of getting a hearing for the good; but very few have successfully raised their standards again. Compromise does not succeed; the shoddy does not build a foundation for the solid. One may study the history of Hollywood, or of well-meaning societies rather nearer home, and see the same truth; to yield to an uneducated public taste is to be oneself corrupted; you do not create an audience which will accept what you give it, so

that you can pass off the good disguised as the familiar bad; you create one accustomed to the second-rate and made uneasy and resentful by the unfamiliar; you dig your own grave. Your good intentions fizzle out in half-hearted experiments, made in the expectation of failure, after which you settle back in your rut not without relief.

Good plays cannot be palmed off on the public, but must be presented for what they are. This does not mean that the Pasadena Players should have embarked on a programme of avowed intellectualism or highbrow experiment—which they were very far from doing; or that they should have followed the schoolmaster's method of moral coercion, of telling the public that they ought to go to the theatre because they ought to improve their minds and acquaint themselves with masterpieces—though their publicity has throughout dropped repeatedly into this tactical error. It does mean that a successful theatre needs courage and perception; the perception to know how much appreciation and interest there is, active or latent, in the public mind, and the courage to use what is active and appeal to what is latent. From this realistic and sympathetic approach the policy of promising uplift and presenting trash is very far removed.

Perhaps these are words and ideals? No one who has had anything to do with the amateur theatre in Christchurch is likely to underestimate the amount of ignorance, immaturity and sluggishness to be met with. But at the same time any such person knows—and could have told Mr Grimsdale—that the picture has another side. The amateurs have, by diligent puffing, waked a small spark. There is the dawning of some kind of consciousness of the theatre. In the cavernous recesses of the public mind stirs uneasily a faint recollection of having looked on Shakespeare, O'Neill, Eliot, Bridie without actual dismay. There is something alive, something that can be worked on. It was surely the business of a professional theatre seeking to establish itself and do good work to seize upon this, to blow on the spark, to hammer where the iron was even faintly warm, to make some use, in short, of the much work and the little achievement of the last few years; not to ignore it and be led by preconceived ideas into the descending spiral of commercialism.

I have said nothing about the acting and technical ability of the American players because nothing is of any importance unless the directors can be persuaded to change their policy.

By such a choice of plays ability must be dampened; but one had the impression of distinct talent which had been encouraged rather than the reverse to a certain tameness and over-reliance on technical devices, and of a technique of production which seemed, by the best New Zealand standards, to lack something in variation of pace and cohesion and drive in presentation. A play should appear as a single smooth movement to an appointed goal; but no company can be blamed for not creating this impression when set to act *Separate Rooms.*

Our hopes at the moment cannot be very high. This is written in January and will appear in March; by then my forebodings will, I sincerely hope, be disproved. But the Pasadena Players have not shown at the outset much sign that they can grip and mould the material for a living and intelligent public which is ready to hand; they have instead shown us a discouraging series of commercial successes which have failed to be commercial successes. For the public reaction has been sluggish and has not yielded even to the urgings of the press. Whether this is to be ascribed to bad publicity, a badly-chosen season (it has coincided with school and university examinations), or an unlooked-for public realization that the not-good-enough is not good enough, it is too early to say. We can do no more than wish our visitors luck, and wish, rather more fervently, that they may deserve it.

P.S. Since the above was written it has been announced that the Pasadena Players are to leave Christchurch and open a season in Auckland, and that they may remain there or go on tour; while the other Kerridge company is to go on tour from Auckland, and will visit Christchurch. It is not clear whether this is the development of a policy previously envisaged, or—what it looks like—the abandonment of the Christchurch experiment. What is clear is that everyone who takes the theatre seriously should watch the development of Mr Kerridge's plans very carefully, and endeavour to see both what is being done and on what assumptions it is being done.

HUBERT WITHEFORD

A NOTE ON SOME WAR FILMS

LAST OCTOBER *La Grande Illusion*, Renoir's film of the 1914-18 war, showed for a week in Wellington. It was, I think, a truly great film and a consequence of this was that one had not so much the feeling of measuring it by other more or less accepted films as of measuring them against its deep and intricate humanity. How pallid against it seemed those efficient British films of the post-documentary era that showed us with good taste and few heroics what life was like in the air force or the merchant marine or the prison camps. How arid the realism that successfully displayed

> . . . that inanimate cold world allowed
> To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,

—the crowd which not even the presence of General Freyberg could attract to *La Grande Illusion*.

What was it that these films of the forties lacked? In answering this it is helpful to remember in what their particular merit consisted. It was in the avoidance of those objectionable qualities we had learned to expect from the overwhelming majority of Hollywood films and which were summed up in the word ' glamour '. It became easy enough to detect and denounce this glamour, too easy in fact. Its presence in a film sometimes led critics to disregard the more interesting qualities that were occasionally combined with it. Thus there was general condemnation among the cognoscenti of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, which certainly did miss most of its opportunities. Some of them, however, it used brilliantly, and in particular there emerged from it the figure of the unprincipled guerilla leader Pablo, who must be almost the only credible and sympathetic enemy of the Fascists to have appeared on an Anglo-Saxon screen.

From films such as *San Demetrio London*, *Western Approaches*, *The Way Ahead*, *The Captive Heart* and *Waterloo Road* glamour was excluded and in its place there was a fidelity to what were, perhaps, the less interesting aspects of service and civilian life. The war, these films suggested, was a job that had to be done without unnecessary heroics and hypocrisy. This attitude avoided many falsities but it excluded most of life from its order of reference, and one

remembered now and then that reticence may be the most effective form of cant.

It is of course rather misleading to lump a number of films together in this way; some were better and some worse than the above remarks would suggest. *The Way to the Stars* celebrated Anglo-American friendship and bomber squadrons with a sentimentality which self-conscious understatement made more unpleasant than the grosser tears of Hollywood. *The Way Ahead* described the conversion of a number of civilians into a platoon of soldiers very vividly and, in many ways, very frankly. But the general tendency was quite clear and it was apparent not only in the cinema. Something similar is to be noticed in British political life at present and distinguishes it, for the better, from American or French politics. (How clearly one sees them—Captain Attlee, Lieutenant Cripps, Sergeant Bevin, Corporal Shinwell, grim and, some of them, taciturn beside their disabled tank while the panzer columns clank on towards the channel.)

It would be wrong to suppose that this tone is peculiar to war films produced in a belligerent country or with a belligerent motif. *The Last Chance* which was produced in Switzerland portrayed the flight over the Alps of a party of refugees from German-occupied Italy. It was a plea for international brotherhood and was by no means aesthetically negligible. Through it, however, as through the British war films, there moved various national and social types, now and again reminding you of people you had met somewhere, real enough to make you sorry for them or amused by them but no more. It had a point to make and was determined to make it rather than let its situations and images evolve in their own way. Internationalism, in fact, was not enough.

It is this flatness that is revealed by comparison with *La Grande Illusion.* In it the adventures of French officers captive in Germany during the war of 1914-18 show the disintegration of the old aristocratic European community and the ever-renewed community of adversity among the suffering and displaced peoples. This study of a dissolving civilization has about it a quite architectural symmetry which does not appear as a plan which is filled in by more or less convincing detail but as a pattern which emerges naturally from its material. By an avoidance of the platitudinous and a regard for a certain fresh and, as it deceptively seems, arbit-

rary quality in life, the characters in *La Grande Illusion* are made, not types brought in to illustrate a general argument, but people who exist in their own right.

The Long Voyage Home if it can be classed as a war film —the war in it was only one more hazard of the sea—is the only other war film I know that has this three-dimensional quality. Here too the general theme emerges seemingly of its own accord from the lives of individuals. Here too is something of that wise audacity in symbolism and acceptance of new ways of seeing that must develop if the cinema is to become an art that can be criticized in terms other than those of the technician or literary critic.

These two films show their events not as a series of exciting or harrowing accidents but as tragedy. You don't have to be at all interested in a man to be excited if you see him run over by a tram or just escape that end. It is on this fact that the post-documentary war film depends for its emotional effects. But behind *La Grande Illusion* and *The Long Voyage Home* is an art sufficiently skilled to trace the web which interweaves human character and human fate and of which the next skein, though it can never be surely anticipated, once drawn appears as inevitable and entirely just. It is the profound appropriateness as well as the intrinsic and visual quality of the scene in *La Grande Illusion* where the French officer in scrupulously complete uniform sits on the ramparts of the fortress playing a pipe, that makes the death of de Boeldieu an episode not so much painful or stirring as lyric.

The two films provide particularly appropriate symbols for the present phase of our civilization. Their subject is its immense destructiveness, the continuous peacelessness of which war is the most overt and acute form. The central image in each case is the prisoner—in *La Grande Illusion* the prisoner whose fate is the most terrible is not any of the Frenchmen but the governor of the fortress where they are confined, the aristocrat and airman who has been crippled and has become ' not a soldier but a policeman '. In *The Long Voyage Home* the prisoners are sailors on a tramp steamer who hate the sea but never leave it because they have nowhere else to go.

Yet the civilization which has produced these dreadful situations has produced also the films that show them. Here is evidence of that intensification of consciousness in the twenti-

eth century of which the most magnificent testimony is the work of Proust and Joyce. If the cinema has not provided anything that is perfect in the way *A La Recherche du Temps Perdu* is perfect its productions are more significant from one point than could be those of any individual genius since they must be the work not of one man but of many. Before *La Grande Illusion* could be made, director, writers, actors, and many others had to appreciate, each in his own way, certain new and illuminating subtleties.

Disease has a creative as well as a destructive function, new kinds of knowledge rise through the ravaged mind and body. As the disease of a civilization approaches its climax this knowledge may cease to be manifested through a 'social' art form such as the cinema. Perhaps the period immediately before the spread of the 1939-45 war was the first and last time when films like *La Grande Illusion* and *The Long Voyage Home* could be made. It may be that a progress to the petrifaction of the police state or dissolution by atomic energy will continue beneath the light of more flattering and less brilliant torches. But these films are evidence of a creative power in our society which, while it lasts, can transmute even the worst disasters for its own purposes.

A. R. D. FAIRBURN

ART IN CANTERBURY

Some Notes on the Group Show

Most art shows in New Zealand are unexciting. There is nearly always a predominance of the sort of dull trash that is thought of by the public (and by most artists) as being 'traditional'.

It is true that the continuity of tradition—in the proper sense of that word—provides the background of meaning in all the arts. But to look upon crudely representational 'peeps' and 'glimpses' of the New Zealand landscape, and laborious little flower-pieces, as having any connection with any tradition whatsoever is evidence of hopeless mental con-

fusion. As well produce a stuffed nursery rabbit as proof of the Darwinian theory.

Since the Group Show held in Christchurch last November was retrospective—an anthology of the best Canterbury work of a decade of two—I expected it to be well above the average. In one sense I was not disappointed. Somehow one thinks of Canterbury art as consisting mainly of alps and tussock, rendered in timid pastel shades: those great striped mountains, like crouching tigers, tamed and genteelized in conformity with a demurely Anglican spirit. There were half-a-dozen of these sugar-candy mountain scenes, and some other landscapes that were clearly meant to be hung in the boudoir, but in total area they were not oppressive. There was a higher proportion of work that was in one way or another 'interesting' than one normally dares to hope for. And there was more variety of style and subject-matter than is to be found in, for instance, the usual Auckland show.

I liked, as well as anything, the unobtrusively good work of W. J. Reed. His *Storm Clouds, Bathans* was well-disciplined without being inhibited. Of his five exhibits the only one I did not care for was a decorative piece, *Consider the Lily*, which was too lush. Where his landscape succeeded, that of Austen Deans failed. His *Mountains and Fantails* and *Totara* were ill-conceived and messy. (Consider how a Japanese artist would have handled the first; and what one of our old stagers—Gully, for instance—would have done with the second.)

One of the most striking things in the exhibition was a small painting by Edith Wall, *Woman with Cinerarias*. This had a sophistication, of both conception and handling, that emphasized the lack of it in most of the surrounding work.

And there was a scattering of really meaningless work, of the sort one expects to find in an 'art' shop window, but not in a Group Show; Cora Wilding's *Pohutukawa*, for example.

With the memory of half-a-dozen Auckland shows in my mind, and with this retrospective Canterbury show in front of me, I found it interesting to make comparisons.

In both cities one finds, in various manifestations, two qualities that seem to be the distinguishing features of New Zealand painting—and I speak now only of the five or ten per cent of work that can be taken at all seriously. First there is vulgarity. This may take the form one finds in

Canterbury—a sort of effeminacy, an insistence on over-careful, rather than strong, drawing; and a reluctance to use any colour combinations that are not 'sweet'. (I believe the fabric-manufacturers use the term 'art shades'.) True, Rita Angus uses *bright* colour at times. But one misses those subtly violent arrangements of colour that give energy and life to the paintings of Matisse, Matthew Smith and other Europeans who have adventured in the spectrum. Auckland painting, at its best, is more vigorous in its draughtsmanship, even if it is at times a bit heavy-footed. And its colour is braver, if occasionally muddier. But in both cities it is rare to find *sureness of taste*, of the kind shown by Edith Wall in her picture of the woman with the cinerarias. I think it is the merit of M. T. Woollaston that he has this quality in nearly all his work. Some of the paintings he hung in this Group Show were too diffuse, too loosely-organized. But all of them showed something I must call artistic good-breeding in order to avoid the word 'refinement'. The particular quality of his brushwork, and the sophisticated way in which he handles a 'dirty palette', gave these paintings a certain distinction even in those cases where there was a little too much wilfulness in other directions.

The other fault that seems to haunt New Zealand painters is dullness. One expects bad painters to be dull. But when an artist has a considerable technique, one expects it to be transcended sooner or later. Of the really talented painters in this country there are very few who do not suffer from some sort of arrested development, a failure to get the wings fully spread and to take flight. In this show I took note of several painters who would profit greatly by the sort of imaginative release that appears to be so difficult to achieve in New Zealand. Evelyn Page and J. A. Johnstone are very good artists indeed, but I feel that both of them have become muscle-bound. W. H. Allen (if he could discard the spurious romanticism of *Nocturne*) might also develop further, with the technical capacity he possesses. Rita Angus has not contrived to break out of whatever it is that has been confining her for years; on the contrary, I notice a tendency to niggle in her landscapes, and to provide maps of people instead of portraits, which suggests that her talent is being starved.

Perhaps it is not the fault of the painters. Perhaps it is simply a cramp that is caused by carrying too heavy a burden —the burden of having to paint for the New Zealand public.

27.5 x 62.5 cm.

EARLY PAINTINGS OF OTAGO FROM THE HOCKEN LIBRARY, DUNEDIN

1. GEORGE O'BRIEN. *Otago Harbour from Signal Hill, 1866.* Water colour.

2. GEORGE O'BRIEN

Sawmill, Leith Valley. Pencil drawing.
27 x 19.5 cm.

18 x 27.5 cm.

3. EDWARD IMMYNS ABBOTT.

Dunedin from Little Paisley. Water colour.

4. JOHN BUCHANAN. *Mt Aspiring from Lake Wanaka.*
Water colour. 18.5 x 24.7 cm.

5. JOHN BUCHANAN. *White birch forest, Matukituki River.*
Water colour. 19 x 24.8 cm.

26.2 x 36.8 cm.

6. W. S. HATTON. *Dunedin about 1867*. Water colour.

Reviewing the retrospective exhibition of Frances Hodgkins' work in London, Roger Marvell said in *The New Statesman* that it included ' a few early works, dated 1902, in which no one could have perceived any sign of genius.' Yet her achievement, according to the same critic, was ' the most impressive in contemporary English painting '. I strongly suspect that if she had stayed in New Zealand she would have been plagued by the conscientious dullness that is the bane of all our painting.

When our best artists fall just short of success the failure is nearly always a failure of the imagination. What can be done about it? The only practicable things I can suggest are that our young painters should be sent abroad to work for several years; that some of the leading painters in England should be invited to come and work here for a few months; and (most important) that some really good exhibitions of contemporary English work should be brought to New Zealand and shown to the general public. After about a dozen such exhibitions had passed through the country the newspapers would cease making jokes about them, the public would get a little more used to them, and we should be ready to get the notion established in New Zealand that art is not just the representation of Nature's prettier aspects minus a dimension. As I write, the cable news tells us that the Wakefield Collection will be coming to New Zealand under British Council auspices in May. This should make a good beginning.

I have said that the Group Show had a good deal more variety in it than I expected to find in any New Zealand show. There was, truly enough, a wide range of subject-matter and of personal style, from the very sophisticated draughtsmanship of Leo Bensemann (who sometimes shows greater sensitivity than Rita Angus in work that has much the same intention; I suspect that he has influenced her) to the experimental cartoons of Colin McCahon.

It is, I think, fairly obvious that Mr McCahon (a man of talent) is trying to get away from the sort of dullness I was complaining about a moment ago. The motive is an excellent one; the mode of escape not so admirable. The homespun pretentiousness of these drawings distressed me. Even though they successfully avoid all the vices of the genteel style of painting, they substitute no virtues that can be

perceived with the naked eye. In design, in colour, in quality of line, in every normal attribute of good painting, they are completely lacking. Is it possible that they have a meaning *not* to be picked up by the naked eye? Have they some profound religious revelation for us? I can only say that I suspect not. They might pass as *graffiti* on the walls of some celestial lavatory—say in an Aimée MacPherson temple—but that is about all. Pretentious hocus of this kind, and of the kind offered us by Madeline Vyner in her two exhibits, is bad for the politics of art: it gives the philistines a rod to beat the backs of those painters who want to escape from the encircling gloom of the Academy by other and more legitimate means.

REVIEWS

REPORT ON EXPERIENCE. John Mulgan. *Oxford University Press: Geoffrey Cumberlege.* 7/6.

JOHN MULGAN was twenty-one when he left New Zealand. It is a good age to be—though, like the rest of our goods, transitory and improving in retrospect. At twenty-one a man's power to digest experience is only less vigorous than his appetite for it; and his elders, whether in tolerance or resignation, are better disposed to countenance his appetite than he has found them hitherto. More important, perhaps, he has already a cud of knowledge about himself and the world to chew: he will already have begun to essay on his own account some conclusions about what is good in both, and what is bad.

For this process the year of John Mulgan's departure is also important—1933. New Zealand was still deep in the depression. The unemployed riots were only lately over: for an honest, ardent, generous mind they would never be over. More especially was this so for Mulgan. For his ardour and his generosity, ignorant of the issues, of the desperation and misery that these riots were an effort to render articulate, drew him in on the wrong side. But he

was not a fool: awareness swiftly succeeded ignorance and his honesty reflected on what his experience as a Special Constable taught him. The result of that reflection is plain in both his books, the novel *Man Alone* (1939) and *Report on Experience*, lately published. There we can see how the sudden realization that many of his own countrymen had been living in misery while he lived in the sun seized his imagination and his sympathy and turned his mind towards the problem that is at the root not only of his writing but our living. The problem can be formulated in many ways. Let us say it is the problem of how men are to live together. To hear it stated is for all of us in this decade to realize at once its relevance, and its difficulties.

It is awareness of this problem and all its antinomies, then, that conditions Mulgan's writing and makes it serious. In *Man Alone* it is the underlying theme: for *Man Alone* is a novel and Mulgan was too naturally an artist—however far from reaching that perfection the art of the novel denies to the first creations of even its most earnest practitioners—to let his theme get the better of his characters. But the theme is there, as the title witnesses; and it is Johnson's apparently aimless progress towards a cause bigger than his own harmless egotism which gives the book a unity in spite of its straggling, picaresque structure and the awkward placing of its main incident.

In his latest book—and, a country not rich in writers must keenly regret, his last also—the theme is again fundamental. But here he is practising another art. It is the canons of autobiography that he must obey, and in part modify. (For no true artist leaves his art quite as he found it, though the critic, whose curious function is to bury birth and baptize death, will probably charge him with ignorance or impiety.)

The canons of autobiography: the phrase demands an explanation. I conceive all art, then, as a means by which the artist communicates to others a life they would not otherwise have. In the novel the characters are the medium through which this additional life is lived. In autobiography the medium is the author himself and he is himself our proxy.

In *Report on Experience* it is the author's mental and emotional life we are given to share. One of the special difficulties of the difficult art of autobiography is for the writer to be true to events and to his character and yet to

avoid that clamancy of self which would make it impossible for the reader's identity to merge in his. Two circumstances, intimately connected, help Mulgan here. In the first place, he is a modest man and shuns even the appearance of egotism; his ability to be interested in other people makes it easy for other people to be interested in him, and that very capacity—of which he sometimes complains—to find some common ground with all men will enable all men to find something of themselves in what he writes. Secondly, he is preoccupied with his theme. And that theme, as emerges from what I said earlier, is himself only so far as what happened to him can throw light on the central problem: how men are to live together.

A score of passages, the most important in the book, show this preoccupation in relief. There is, for example, the passage towards the end of the first chapter: after moved and moving recollections of the New Zealand he knew, where gentle irony alternates with nostalgia for the country which had given him the good things he says it gave to others—' sunshine and strength, good sense, patience, the versatility of practical men '—he goes on to a dream of the New Zealand that the future might see; a dream which merges the note of Lucretius describing the home of the gods with the humbler note of Langland and which, such are the absurdities of our narrow nationalism, is never more impractical than when it is most bluntly practical.

Or, again, he speaks—truly—of the relief felt by the English when they could at last ' share as veterans in their own right the same communion of suffering ' that had been felt by Madrid, Barcelona, Shanghai and Chungking. This knowledge that life must be lived in common, that only in society can the life of the individual be full, that the self to be fully itself must share, is the measure he brings to all the societies he considers: to New Zealand, to England, to the war ' that concerned all men ', to the army—' when the unit is working well everyone in it feels the same satisfaction of knowing they are good '—and to the future which he devotes his last chapter to considering.

But one cannot see the interdependence of man and society without searching for some theory of how they can be best related; searching, in short, for a political faith. And here Mulgan met the predicament that awaits all men in our time who see that what we have is imperfect but whose

critical reason will give no absolute adherence to the popular orthodoxies.

For as he did what lay to his hand and surveyed with cool affection the men and organizations around him—in England the English and their army, in the desert his unlucky battalion and the New Zealanders he casually and with reminiscent understanding encountered, in Greece the Italian soldiery, the peasants, the partisans, the 'comrades'—he must have come more and more to realize that the critical reason remains at last alone. The man who remains true to his intellect, to its integrity, is the martyr of our time: for if, in selfish prudence, he keeps his questioning to himself he denies the first rule of living—that 'no man is an island'; and if he carries his questioning abroad he is at once in conflict with those angry faiths which are at one only in hating heretics and in believing truth to be a landmark, not a horizon.

This was Mulgan's dilemma, then, or rather the dilemma he was approaching: for in the last chapter we see him groping still, going back to the simplest elements in men's need and trying, by a reconsideration of these, to see if the mosaic cannot be so put together again that pattern will flower out of the chaos. He did not succeed. But the attempt is more significant than the failure: for it is in this attempt to find the way by which the life of ourselves and all our fellow men can be enriched and given a meaning that has engrossed the finest spirits of our generation, however imperceptible this fact may be to those still in clerical leading-strings who pipe catchwords like 'materialism' without seeing that the 'spiritual qualities' whose absence they lament from our literature have gone into this, the only effort worthy of a noble mind.

I have thought this point so important, so central to Mulgan's writing, that I have left little space to dwell on matters not less interesting because they are subsidiary. There is his own character, for example, as it is revealed on every page and all the more vividly because he was so little occupied with its presentation. That implies modesty. And modesty there is of a kind so sincere that it compels admiration, and affection, too. But it is no anaemic modesty: it springs from the fact that Mulgan had high standards and knew he could not always reach them. But he took this as no exemption from trying and these same standards underlie

his criticism of others, sharper in its implications than its expression.

Again, there is the artist's misgiving at his own special talent: 'I have always felt it a weakness in myself to like and be attracted by too many different kinds of men.' There is his humour, often wry, often ironical, and his tendency to pursue emphasis only through understatement. And everywhere there is tolerance, fairness even in prejudice, and the deep humanity which, whether he is talking of the unemployed in New Zealand and England, of his broken colonel after Alam Nayil, or of common men in Greece at grips with their tragic fate, can be felt sincere under the quiet sentences.

Nor should the technique of the book be overlooked, hidden like the author's own qualities in the simplicity that is not won without art. Take, for example, the way the life of his mind and heart move forward organically, the events playing in that progress the role of bones supporting and anchoring the muscles of the thought. Or the way the chapters move between generalization and the living instance, between the universal and the particular: so that you go from his fortunes in the desert and those of his battalion to a consideration of courage and are still reflecting on that when you find that from a difficult situation in a desert officers' mess you have moved with him to a wet winter in Greece and are waiting for a plane to bring the supplies to partisans of whom you now are one.

The style, too, has the same deceptive simplicity. There is scarcely a sentence in the book that might not have been spoken by a reasonably clearheaded New Zealander—so close is the rhythm to the natural rhythms of New Zealand speech. And yet, as you follow this ease, this unpretentiousness of language, you will find yourself passing without sense of rupture to fine descriptions of the desert scene or the plain of Thessaly; or to a fully and coherently developed metaphor like that of war as a storm, a metaphor which stems so quickly from a shaky generalization.

For there are shaky elements in the book. There are faults. These arise partly, I fancy, from the fact we must keep in sight, the fact that this book is a 'draft' and (by its original title) a summary. I pass over minor irritants in the style like the annoying 'I, personally' which, even if it appeared only once, would appear too often. The gener-

alization I have called shaky is a fairer example, if only because the fault is more serious. 'Common men no longer start wars.' But did common men ever start wars? And, again, towards the end of the book he attacks the Germans for the destruction they left in their retreat, on the score of needlessness. We, too, following that grisly wake in Italy, felt this. But surely it is only by a confusion about ends and the nature of fascism that we can consider the destruction they wreaked in their outward wave more pardonable?

But these blemishes, and others like them, were due no doubt to haste and to being too close to events. And in wishing them away one should remember that we owe to the same causes much of the book's freshness, its ardent pace. If Mulgan had lived we should have had the freshness without the faults.

If Mulgan had lived: it is too late now to speculate whether if, like other expatriates, he had gone back to the Division he might not have escaped the isolation, the being a foreigner among foreigners, which he must have felt deeply at times; might not, even, have been with us still. But one question we can ask, if only because the answer is implicit in his life. Should the talents of such a man be risked in war? His life, as we can infer it from this book, answers: whatever else excuses duty, talent does not. And more, the talent that evades the common duty will never reach the synthesis between itself and the community sought by a man who knows the claims of both.

His country, then, has matter for pride in Mulgan. There are other harvests than those that come home under the Canterbury sun, other returns than those made down the gangways at Wellington or Auckland. He left New Zealand, carrying an island to the world. In the books he has left behind he has carried the world back to his island.

Dan Davin

THE ROAD TO TRIESTE. Geoffrey Cox. *Heinemann.* 12/6.

RARELY is it possible for a man with literary ability to be at the centre of military activity and planning. A name that springs readily enough to mind is Dan Davin, who made

Intelligence work a tenuous background for his recent novel *For the Rest of Our Lives*. Geoffrey Cox is another. Unlike Davin he has chosen the safer course of recording, with obvious fidelity, the factual details of an arduous campaign. He is not concerned with the individual soldier. The separate exploit is absent. He tries above all to describe the organization of war and, if possible, to discover the qualities which made the New Zealand Division one of the ablest fighting forces in the area.

The book is important, for it will shape the campaign memories of some thousands of New Zealanders who, by the very nature of the fighting, could not, or did not, keep a diary. It is a sane, careful, unpretentious account which should level out the vague distortions and failings of memory to which all soldiers (and others) are prone. It has the added merit of explaining to those who did not take part the technical ingenuity and precision involved in the mammoth task of moving large groups of men forward into battle.

From the earliest pages, which describe the busy days spent in battle training among the quiet hills and remote villages of central Italy, Mr Cox is at pains to insist that the Division was a civilian army: a living, working, expatriate group sharing the natural qualities which Mr Holcroft has found in the people within our shores. Even the sunshine beats down with New Zealand intensity on the white roads and the fields that are green with spring crops. At the conclusion of the anxious night-journey from the encircling hills of the Papal States to the flat, narrow fields of Lombardy the same theme recurs: ' Here the Division spread itself, a community of 17,000 men, over the countryside, into farms and houses, under hedgerows, along fields.' Later he describes the Division as ' a segment of New Zealand life transferred overseas.' From there it is a logical step to a partial explanation of the superb quality of the Division: ' Men who are fighting alongside their fellows from their own town, alongside men who will remember their success or failure throughout the rest of their lives, have strong incentives to do their best. You cannot let a man down if you are going to meet him in the street every remaining day of your life.' Add to that John Mulgan's analysis in his *Report on Experience* and one must be very near to the truth: ' Everything that was good from that small, remote

country had gone into them—sunshine and strength, good sense, patience, the versatility of practical men.'

Those who knew the zest, and the fear, of that last campaign will find little to quarrel with in the description of those swift, mad, unforgettable April days which took the men of our country from the nondescript Senio River to the outskirts of Trieste. Mr Cox's insistence on the curiously unspectacular nature of total war is a certain indication that his pen is not running riot. The problem of the city of Trieste is set down as plainly as it can be without distortion of its real significance. He cannot, in his limited scope, cut very deeply beneath the surface; it is the journalist, or the platform lecturer, rather than the historian, who is speaking. Perhaps further examples of 'incidents' in Trieste (there were plenty) would have made it clearer why the New Zealand soldier, in defiance of any logical political principle, found the Italian familiar and friendly, the Slav alien and unkind.

For the most part the book is free from the obvious pitfalls of loose journalism; it avoids the impressionistic memoir and the nostalgic overflow of words in the traditional places. There are few cases of vague rhetoric or of undifferentiated observation; some instances of colloquialism ('we were to go bang at the Senio line with everything we had') are acceptable in a book which has none of the literary pretensions of fine writing.

In the latter days of the campaign, when it became increasingly obvious that the magnificent paper army of the enemy had little more than bicycles and bravado to fight with, Mr Cox delays his story to record a rather unsatisfactory incident. A group of motley Italian partisans armed with Sten guns shoot three regular German troops in the back while they lay, as they supposed, in hiding. In grand terms Mr Cox goes on to speak of it as symbolizing the killing of Fascism by the resurgent common people, and to declare with a bellow of melodrama that 'a tribunal greater than any we could erect, that of history itself, had carried out this verdict.' Even if this rather fanciful conclusion is allowed and it is admitted further that certain strategic bridges were preserved by the partisans, the truer picture that remains of these irregular troops is one of Tartarin-like inaction. Too often, especially in the Padua area, these rather comically-fierce, over-armed bandits arrived on the

scene after the fall of a town, bowed down with grandiose stories, unfired rifles, and loot from the homes of their own countrymen. John Mulgan says of the partisans in Greece: 'Somehow, it seemed to me, the movement had outgrown itself and become militarily worthless.' The rankers' criticism of the Italian partisan movement would be just that. The New Zealander always resented the unruly manner and surly effrontery of the partisans, whatever may have been their value in the complete pattern of events.

It is the privilege of a creative writer to dwell on the aspects to which he is attracted and to excite by special emphasis. An historian, on the other hand, is under a rigid obligation of unity and perspective. One can appreciate the slight whiff of malice against those who 'had not come to the war, or who, even though here in uniform, were qualifying energetically, but well behind the lines, for Returned Soldiers' Association badges'. Yet in return every infantryman who reads the account of the brief, if severe, shelling of Divisional Headquarters near Massa Lombarda may well, when he remembers his own daily dismay of losses, ruefully crease his brow. It is one of the few attempts that Mr Cox makes to insert unreasonable glow into the pale inertia of facts. It is a fault of perspective rather than of truth.

The New Zealand soldier saw little poetry in the Italian landscape. 'The stocky men in grey jerseys' had an eye for a trim figure or a flagon of white wine; there was no place in their ample kits for a Baedeker or a book of poetry. It is to Mr Cox's credit that his literary references are few. Yet, in passing, it has always seemed strange to me that this final campaign did not give us more poetry than it did. No sky was ever deeper with reds and blues; nor was the ground stained with richer blood than our own. No Roman legion ever encountered a more spontaneous uprush of feeling than that shown by the liberated Italians in the busy villages of Venezia Giulia. The dreams and ideals of tomorrow were there too—the rich young vats of the future were full to overflowing—but if a poet were there to crystallize the brimming experience into poetic shape we have yet to hear him. It would almost seem that the energies and sensibilities of our manhood were lavished and lost forever in impetuous physical effort.

The Road to Trieste is, with some minor reservations, a piece of thoroughly competent journey-work; to claim any

more for it would be unprofitable and fallacious. It would be wrong to criticize Geoffrey Cox because his book may lack the colourful incident and the enormous pity which the poet and the novelist find in war. There is no pity or tragedy in these pages. Belsen was all too recent when the line of murder was drawn across the Lombardy fields in a beautiful falling day in April nearly three years ago. Next year that attitude may be as unfashionable, or as forgotten, as last year's robes. In the meantime we despise the Teuton, look with apprehension towards the east and—still seek a Governor of Trieste.

Robert W. Burchfield

YEAR BOOK OF THE ARTS IN NEW ZEALAND NO. 3: 1947. Edited by Howard Wadman. *H. H. Tombs Ltd.* 25/-.

NEW ZEALAND is a small country. Many times a year this tired little truism is used to put our detractors to shame, to account sympathetically for our failings and to turn our achievements into reasons for smugness. But if the reality behind the platitude has false burdens to bear, it has real ones as well. Not only the attitudes fixed by our historical origins, but also our fewness of numbers may be blamed for the lack of a tradition of art criticism that is both seriously written and seriously read. Our local singers and actors have relations and friends, our local musicians have keen susceptibilities and little practice in assimilating critical comment, so press reviews of local manifestations of art are almost invariably vague, favourable, descriptive balderdash.

Since critics have been hushed and selectors kind, New Zealand art exhibitions commonly provide displays which suggest that he who paints may hang. This lack of pruning and ruthless discrimination in a country where many practise art and few are artists was a patent failing in the first two *Year Books of the Arts*. Reduced to a mere display ground, the important painting section baldly presented the many; the few, who deserved special comment and space for a number of works, huddled equal among them.

The new *Year Book of the Arts in New Zealand*, again edited by Howard Wadman, has improved on its precursors.

Although Mr Wadman, with a 'Brutus is an honourable man' technique, has in his introduction set the critics of the 1946 *Year Book* against one another and presumably justified his policy in the process, he has taken some of the advice offered, has narrowed his field and has stamped the book with a personal taste that happily includes the experimental, the simple and the vigorous in New Zealand art while finding little place for the unhappy and uninspired landscapes that monotonously dot the walls of our galleries. The number of names is still too great and the number of reproductions from leading painters is still limited to the inadequate two or three (did Russell Clark submit no more than one?), but the emphasis has moved in the right direction from quantity to quality. A future *Year Book* might well move further. It could without unfairness reduce the generous number of sixty-six artists to forty or thirty, could allow the few principals between five and ten reproductions each, and by careful grouping of styles and tendencies could make easier the comparison and judgment of the artists included. For such judgment, incidentally, the size of the originals must be known.

This year for the first time leading artists have set out their personal background and credo of art. Their articles, sometimes rough-hewn and always interesting, are a valuable addition to the book. The perceptive comments of Eric Lee Johnson contain a passage that pertinently complements what Mr Wadman in his introduction has had to say about New Zealand art galleries and recent purchases for them. 'We have spent more than enough on museum pieces by dead English painters,' says Eric Lee Johnson, 'and balance can only be restored by importing and giving equal space to some English and Australian contemporaries, and some contemporary work from countries outside the Empire.' This states the situation mildly. In a country distant from world art centres the content of art galleries is a vital problem. The *Arts Year Book* could perhaps perform a useful service by recording, with comment (though the mere record would often suffice), the purchases of the year for our principal galleries.

In reviews as in the *Year Book* itself predominance is given to the section on visual arts. This may be unfortunate but is probably inevitable since these are the arts that can be reproduced. Drama, music and in part architecture have

to be represented by criticism; while poetry, crowded into a disproportionately short space, alone represents the verbal arts. True, novels and short stories cannot be included; but Mr Wadman's announced determination to neglect the literary arts leaves the yearly catalogue of New Zealand artistic activity sadly unbalanced and reduces its reference value. Two or three pages should be spared for summary survey and listing of books or stories belonging in the small and vital class of additions to New Zealand literature.

The introductory articles on music, architecture, drama and poetry are written by people who have experience and a live interest in these subjects. With one exception they are intelligent and useful, helping to make the *Year Book* something more than a dull record of production for the year. It is very important, from the point of view of future production, that we should not merely be shown examples of New Zealand work but made critically aware of it.

While the special articles abound in good sense, their wisdom is frequently encased in an English prose style that is casual if not chaotic. ' One must urge with all possible force that any dramatic society has an at least aesthetic obligation to the community of the most binding nature ' (p. 134) is a sentence that should not appear in any book claiming to be sensitive to the arts. Scholarly editing should smooth out barbarisms and ensure at least competence, if elegance eludes our grasp.

Frederick Page has contributed a music chronicle that indicates an alert enjoyment of this very rich year. Written in Mr Page's electric style, the article serves to recall and record pleasant moments from 1947 concerts; it considers our National Orchestra, rebuffs, commends and offers suggestions; it adds a few names to the list of artists we should like to hear in 1948. Since the *Year Book* reviews the arts in New Zealand, Mr Page might well have looked at New Zealand as well as at the Arts and added a useful comment on the discrimination of audiences by indicating the relative popularity of visiting artists and their programmes—Peter Dawson, perhaps, and Ninon Vallin.

Do our houses perch on Helicon simply because architecture, in its highest form, is an art and they come within the category of architecture? It is open to question whether architecture in New Zealand has this year produced buildings which are works of art in their own right. Of the

houses illustrated in the *Year Book* most are agreeably simple and some attractive with the attractiveness that comes from good lines and an air of being well constructed. But a K locomotive also has good lines and an excellent construction; it expresses no idea, however, and makes no claim to art.

For the architecture section Vernon H. Brown has written a helpful introduction. Without space to expand any one of them, he has made a number of points that readily lead to further thought on the failings and the improvements to be seen in our modern house design. He even spares a word for the important, neglected question of furniture design. The group of illustrations could have further complemented the good introduction and sharpened our awareness of architectural values by contrasting with its examples of good style one or two typical samples of 1947 mediocrity or horrible pretension. Like good sociologists we should do well each year to note the quantity of quality as well as its existence.

The rigidly quartered drama notes suffer from lack of uniformity in treatment. No adequate comparison of drama in the four centres can be made, no overall picture of drama in New Zealand can be drawn while one section concentrates attention on number and variety of plays, one on style of production and acting and two others on two further aspects of the subject. Moreover it is negligent and misleading to discuss good productions without mentioning the producer, especially where the designer receives credit. In the Dunedin and Christchurch notes producers are rightly associated with their work.

An article on the Community Arts Service will introduce many people to this interesting new venture and may stimulate like experiments in other parts of the country.

The poetry section unfolds behind an essay compounded of humorous reminiscence, modest declaimer and determined appraisal. (But, Mr Wadman, ruthlessness must balance an editor's generous catholicity). By occupying more space and representing more poets than in earlier *Year Books* the section becomes more satisfactory than it has been before. One trusts Mr Fairburn's choice—but has R. A. K. Mason written nothing in the year? Can W. Hart-Smith fairly claim six precious pages? Is Basil Dowling too far away?

Year Book No. 3 is good. Its format is pleasant, its content improves and its scope widens. Perhaps some future

issue will even widen to take note of New Zealand film-making, usually technically competent and sometimes artistic, and of New Zealand typography which—thanks to The Caxton Press, Whitcombe and Tombs cum J. C. Beaglehole, and Robert Lowry—ministers to the arts in New Zealand with more art, sometimes, than their practitioners deserve. Slight confusion still exists because the editor does not seem quite sure whether he is addressing himself to an audience within New Zealand or overseas, and one can only hope that when he resolves this doubt it will be in favour of New Zealand. The essential function of an arts review in this country is to make New Zealanders conscious of what our artists are creating and help us to be usefully critical of what we see.

Lynette Corner

CHRISTIAN VOCATION IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD. Alexander Miller. *S.C.M. Press.* 3/-.

It is pleasant to come across a book by a New Zealand writer which discusses seriously and ably, if briefly, one of the fundamental problems of our time. Although Mr Miller is writing for Christians the problem confronts all men: it is that of acting morally in an immoral society; and his discussion of it is thus of general interest and concern.

Doubtless Mr Miller would reply to this by saying that at all times the balanced moral life is possible only for Christians, or those who have unconsciously apprehended truths also embodied in the Christian faith. I too, for reasons which will become apparent later, share this conviction that the answer to the problem can be found only within Christian theology. That is sufficient reason—if any were required—for the restriction of the argument to a Christian frame of reference.

Mr Miller endeavours to bridge the gap between the balanced metaphysic of the Protestant faith and the concrete situation in which the layman finds himself today. Life *in* but not *of* the world has always presented the Christian with a problem, and this the book reviews in its historical and contemporary aspects. It is substantially an elaborate answer to the typical modern Christian question put to

Mr Miller at the end of the war by a North American student. Trained for a business career, but feeling that the weekly pay-packet job does not answer his concern to help in building the brave new world, this young man wonders if it would be better to train for social service or go in for church work.

It would be disastrous, Mr Miller replies, if all Christians of intelligence and moral sensitivity were withdrawn from their place in the civil community. Since such jobs as accounting and plumbing are obviously necessary, and important moral decisions are made there, they are as much the place for Christian action as elsewhere. Important as 'uplift' jobs are for the few specially endowed workers, they unfortunately withdraw men from the struggle for the moral improvement of secular life. And Mr Miller observes that ordinary workers, wherever their work lies, know intuitively more about the essential moral problems of today than the minister can compass with his imagination. It is these men and their jobs who really determine social health.

He goes on to deal with the central problem and to give it its historical setting. Since society is inconceivable apart from its 'orders', and we are morally bound to respect them (he quotes Niebuhr on this point: 'The Christian will not take any established order over seriously: he will not disturb any established order irresponsibly.'), how can the Christian serve his highest ideal within worldly forms which entail compromise at every turn? And how have mediaeval and modern Christians solved this tension?

Mr Miller takes the history of Iona to illustrate his theme. He describes the mediaeval Christian communities which settled on the island, and then the new Iona Community, established by the Reformation Church of Scotland in 1938, which is founded upon the Reformers' doctrine of the 'priesthood of all believers'. According to this teaching all vocations can be used as vehicles of praise and glory to God. While Christ's unique calling justified his freer life, the true disciple is not necessarily he who copies its external pattern, but he who is faithful to Christ within his own calling, whatever it may be—'the just judge, the wise and humane administrator, the family man or woman, the labourer or the merchant, the farmer or the fisher.' The Iona Community therefore takes young people from the secular world, teaches them the potentially high nature of all earthly callings, and sends

them back to apply their beliefs within their respective vocations.

Mr Miller observes in passing that although historically even the Reformers' doctrine has been distorted to provide a divine sanction for unjust rule in home, business and government, it is essentially a sound doctrine.

Having a good practical grasp of the uneasy tensions between labour and capital, Mr Miller understands the immoral pacts sometimes formed between employers and their men. He urges the difficulties which beset men entangled in industrial relationships, and also sees how Christians, rationalizing a natural longing for moral and financial security, choose comfortable clean jobs. He rightly questions the too lofty and unscriptural conceptions of work adopted by Eric Gill. Perceiving the interdependent nature of all activities, he stresses justly the fact that we cannot ultimately escape our social obligations.

It is only when we plunge beneath these things that we find that the book, wholly good as far as it goes, has not solved the initial and subjective problem which besets the acutely moral personality. And it is here that I wish Mr Miller had leaned more heavily upon the works quotations from which head most of his chapters. Though both Brunner and Niebuhr are deeply concerned with the problems of contemporary society they are not read by the layman, and their thought forms at this point a necessary and natural supplement to Mr Miller's own statement of the relation between the Christian and his vocation.

Half aware of some deficiency, Mr Miller writes that while the Reformers' doctrine sounds fine in Iona, conditions of work today are so confused morally that it is difficult to see how anyone can serve God in—for example—the heavier industries. Unfortunately he uses the doctrine of the 'calling' as a blanket term which conceals the very snags which drive the pilgrim back to the semi-monastic seclusion of professional, social, and religious work. Since in all the less secluded jobs there is seldom an unequivocal moral decision to be made, how does this teaching ease the conflict for those torn between rival moral duties? It does not cover the man who is bound by the loyalty of a democratic vote to support a strike he thinks immoral, nor the judge who finds himself compelled to impose a sentence which outrages his humanity. The choice in so many jobs is between the

lesser and the greater evil: at no time simply between good and evil.

In this situation, the modern Christian may try to act as an uncompromising moralist within his calling, but in so doing he will prepare the way for anarchy. For the orders without which society cannot exist embody some principles which shelter men, as well as others which expose them to their own worst instincts. Again, he may remain within his vocation, but, not wishing to sully his faith with compromise, refrain from positive moral action. Feeling the need for an improvement within the existing orders, yet seeing the relative character of all moral effort, social action may cost him his faith—a choice preferred by not a few good men. Finally, he may withdraw from those vocations where the conflict is too brutal, thus preserving his moral sensitivity at the expense of the order he leaves.

This apparent dilemma which faces so many Christians today is caused, I believe, by a neglect or misinterpretation of the doctrine of Justification by Grace. This simply means that man can never justify his life to himself or to God by his works, but is wholly dependent upon God's grace or bounty. 'Perfectionists', as Niebuhr calls them, believe that St Paul was referring to his life before conversion when he wrote, 'For the good that I would do that I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.' After conversion, such Christians suppose, his life was morally perfect. Accordingly, they must withdraw from many callings where perfect means can palpably not be used.

Anything which can bridge the gap between absolute moral commands and a society where all action is morally relative is of the utmost importance. In practice, he who relies upon God's forgiveness, knowing before he acts that it will be necessary because of his own fallibility, and acting in the belief that the atonement is real *now*, is freed from the haunting suspicion that the evil he knows he cannot avoid will cancel the good he is trying to do. Therefore, without doing full justice to the logic of 'perfectionist Christianity', I shall try briefly to reconstruct and reinterpret the doctrine of Justification by Grace as it appears to those who take Mr Miller's view of our moral obligations to society.

In the highly sensitive realm of immediate personal relationships St Paul attempted to create the form of the early

Christian church. He met with criticism. We know from Corinthians II in the celebrated passage about the thorn in the flesh that this concurred with his own self-criticism. But after praying that the ' messenger of Satan ' might depart from him, it seemed to St. Paul that God replied, ' My grace is sufficent for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness '. To us this means not that God works through sin, but that He works through the goodwill of an essentially erring and frail humanity.

The combined experience of internal and external criticism forced Paul back, not upon his own moral perfection, but upon God's grace. Far from being discarded, grace would be more necessary to the converted Paul by reason of his heightened sense of good and evil. With the exception of Christ, the lives of the good men of history seem to endorse this interpretation—the saints have their moral flaws but still are better men than we.

However no Christian doctrine is a safeguard against immorality. Perhaps the present century avoids this interpretation because justification, like the doctrine of vocation, was abused in the past. People have sinned that grace might abound. Seen rightly, however, self-criticism, penitence, and humility before God are the perpetual guardians of justification, even as the latter is the shield of our moral dynamic.

This may have seemed to carry us far from the duty of the Christian within the secular calling. The distance is more apparent than real. For if in the field of immediate personal relationships St Paul was forced to confess his failings and to accept God's bounty, how much more necessary is a proper understanding of grace to the man who would work where the ambiguity of moral choice and action is glaringly patent: where it cannot be otherwise. If the Christian in a trade union or in politics does not understand this, then in the piecemeal achievement of justice it will seem to him that his ideal of brotherly love is torn to shreds.

The man who acts as the representative of a firm and the man who represents the employees may both be Christians. Yet on actual issues of justice they will be opposed, for their ideas of justice are refracted to them through the orders which they represent. The perception of good in and loyalty to an order for the sake of its good may sometimes override the claim of the particular instance. For example,

it is common practice not to break records in a large modern factory. To do so may make it hard for the less skilled when labour is plentiful. During a war when class interests are overridden by a higher loyalty, man is free to work as he knows he ought to and production charts soar. In ordinary times, then, the employee may be attacked by other Christians from outside who, not belonging to his group, can see nothing between the absolute moral command and its fulfilment. The Christian then requires a principle upon which he can rely and which will preserve at once his moral sensitivity and its positive character.

To sum up: if the Christian is to participate actively in secular callings he must be equipped with something more than a naive love of his fellows. Otherwise, perceiving the moral contradictions of his own personality and of the 'orders' through which he must work, he will lose his dynamic. Active human goodness within a vocation needs to be purified by means of constant self-criticism and penitence before the absolute commands of Christ. Yet the soul must be set beyond the otherwise paralysing effects of such criticism by a proper understanding of what it means to be justified by grace.

John Summers

READING, FILM, AND RADIO TASTES OF HIGH SCHOOL BOYS AND GIRLS. W. J. Scott. *New Zealand Council for Educational Research.* 10/-.

This book is based upon the answers Mr Scott received from three thousand nine hundred and seventy-two boys and girls to a questionnaire in twelve parts which was submitted to nineteen post-primary schools throughout New Zealand. The schools were of several types—boys', girls', and mixed, high schools, district high schools, and technical high schools; the ages of the pupils ranged from twelve or thirteen to eighteen or nineteen; and the questions were devised to discover as nearly as possible the genuine out-of-school habits of the boys and girls in their reading, cinema-going, and radio-listening. Generalizations are always dangerous; special factors must be allowed for and conclusions

reached slowly and cautiously. The children were questioned for instance about the books they had read, the films they had seen, and the radio programmes they had listened to, during one month only. To cover a longer period would perhaps have increased and complicated the work involved in sorting their answers out of all proportion to any possible gain. I think it is a pity that October was the month chosen; but Mr Scott makes due allowance for the particular disadvantage of this choice in the approach of the end of year examinations; and although I do not remember that he gives it I must suppose that he had some very good reason for making the choice. On the whole it would seem than the answers may with some confidence be taken as fairly representing the 'reading, film, and radio tastes' of adolescent New Zealanders. In the caution and moderation of his findings and his scrupulous fairness to other investigators Mr Scott goes far to forestall criticism; and I was ready before long to submit myself in some trustfulness to his guidance.

In making my vertiginous way through the mass of detail, lists of books, authors, magazines, papers, films, and the rest (there are forty tables of statistics in the two hundred pages), I have alternated between despair, hope, and, predominantly, a pessimistic conviction that in a doomed world it could not matter much what our children were reading, seeing, and hearing. In the face however of Mr Scott's assured opinion that it matters greatly I recognize that my own preponderating mood, however natural after the spectacle provided by the human race over the last thirty to forty years, is in some degree contemptible. There is indeed no hope but in hope. And I recalled my less elderly and ignoble conviction of not so many years ago that art of every kind, and perhaps most especially literature, rightly used, is the greatest humanizing and civilizing influence we possess.

This left me then with my despair and my hope. For the situation displayed in Mr Scott's book is a gloomy one but the gloom is not unrelieved. It is a situation of which no intelligent person can have been altogether unaware, particularly any person in contact however slight with young people of the ages here concerned. But the cumulative effect of the figures produced, the careful documentation of facts already suspected if not certainly known, the precise thinking needed to follow the author through facts and

figures to his conclusions, and the disarming moderation which gives an added credibility to his conclusions—all this engenders a depression not easily shaken off. Yet, to consider reading first—in the lists of the fifty authors who appear to be most popular among these post-primary school children Dickens takes the third place with both boys and girls, while Stevenson, Dumas, and Mark Twain are all in the first twenty-five with both; R. M. Ballantyne heads the boys' list and Louisa M. Alcott comes second on the girls' (but alas! a very poor second to L. M. Montgomery); and Charlotte Bronte and Jane Austen also make a good showing among the girls. With hope thus raised it is disconcerting to learn from the author's comments on these lists that they are after all misleading. In too many instances the books by these writers were begun but never finished. Mr Scott is notoriously impatient, though in this book his impatience is mildly expressed, with anything short of the best. He is not surprised, I think, to find how large an amount of second- or third-rate reading, or worse, appears among the books chosen by adolescents; but he deplores it and he does *not* think it is better than no reading. He admits that in some cases it may be the best reading of which particular classes of children are capable, but not that it is on that account the less deplorable. In most of this I can fully sympathize; but I will confess to a pleased surprise that the older classics still find so many readers even though too large a percentage of these could not stay the course. These older classics do not form the staple diet of these young people as they did mine, and certainly modern children read less poetry than I did. But I had far more time for reading than the average child of even my own day—no afternoon school and virtually no home-work during the years between twelve and sixteen; and we were all of us less distracted by other interests. In girls' schools at least there was not so much sport and there was no cinema and no radio. Magazines and other periodicals, too, were less current in those days; I cannot remember that they ever came my way; and the appalling phenomenon of the digest was surely unknown. Neither was there the same multiplicity of books and authors that we now see, nor were those we had so readily available in public, 'commercial', and school libraries. If Scott and Dickens and Thackeray, Jane Austen and George Eliot and the Brontes, Dumas and Victor Hugo, Defoe and Goldsmith, Ballantyne

and Kingston, Stevenson and Hardy, Louisa M. Alcott and Mark Twain, and their more modern counterparts, can keep even a modest footing, as they appear to do, against the easy claptrap of lesser authors and the viciously false and distorted views of life presented by film after film and by many of the radio serials for which some of these children apparently have so distressingly large an appetite, then all is not yet lost.

With most, though admittedly not with all, of the books and authors mentioned by Mr Scott as appearing in the answers to his questions, I have some acquaintance, and can therefore, when not too sadly bedevilled by figures, make some fairly successful attempt to follow if I cannot always keep up with him. But the greater number of the periodicals mentioned are outside my beat. One or two of the adult productions are well known, a few others I have met with occasionally on some unusual excursion; the juveniles are, or were, not even names to me. There is some evidence that Mr Scott was himself in a similar position, though it is unlikely that he was as ignorant as I who years ago decided that I need no longer attempt to keep abreast of the young. I do not envy him any part of the work involved in this survey, least of all the stern sense of duty that drove him to examine and analyze these juvenile fiction magazines. I shall not seek a closer acquaintance with them, and all I shall say of them here is that their popularity would be even more appalling if it were not that, as Mr Scott says, it is clear that boys and girls do grow out of the habit of reading them, ' though it takes some of them a long time '.

When it comes to the cinema I am again at a disadvantage —as a judge, that is, of the children's tastes: absolutely, I cannot so regard my position. In the two lists of films most popular with the boys and with the girls the names of forty-nine separate films appear, and of these I have seen only twelve. Mr Scott says of these forty-nine films, however, that ' nearly all of them would be included in the best twenty or so of their particular year; many would rank even higher ', and he considers that the taste shown by the children was, as in their reading, ' on the whole above the average but below the best '. From a comparatively narrow personal experience of films but a much wider acquaintance with them from hearsay, I should agree with this judgment. It serves merely to emphasize, however, how distressingly low the

general standard is: and the point is that far too many boys and girls must inevitably be seeing far too many poor films. If they get no active harm from them they can much more certainly get little active good in an improved understanding of the human world on whose threshold they stand. The really first-class film is too rare, and even the most adult, intelligent, and civilized film-goer tends to lower his standards over the years and accept with some gratitude one that even approaches the first-class.

A short section on the radio concludes Mr Scott's inquiry; and here again I must be content to trail behind, my own radio tastes being too narrow to allow me to go by the author's side. As was to be expected, for many of these children the radio forms a regular background in their home life. Many must obviously have to do their reading and writing and preparation of work against its sound. Mr Scott suggests that this may be less distracting than the older among us would readily suppose, that 'the modern adolescent early learns to work against a background of music and talk and loses little if any of his powers of concentration'. I think this is almost certainly so, though I think also that the power of resistance probably varies as between child and child and probably too from day to day in the less placid. There is a doubt in my mind also as to whether the enforced habit of closing their ears at home may not be carried over into the class-room. But I am, with Mr Scott, more concerned about the amount and the nature of their active listening. The amount of serial-following, for instance, even if the quality of the serials concerned were very much better than Mr Scott describes it as being, appears to represent at the best too much restless distraction. On the other hand, in their answers to the question as to what type of programme they particularly liked a heartening number of pupils mentioned music; but their failure to make clear what kind of music they meant has a sobering effect. This, the radio-listening, is the least determinate part of the inquiry. Nevertheless Mr Scott manages to make some deductions from which it would appear that the radio on the whole is handsomely assisting the cinema in its generally debilitating influence on the adolescent mind.

Throughout the survey the viewpoint of the teacher of

English is discernible, implicit where it is not expressed. Mr Scott pays tribute to the schools for the part they have played in keeping the older classics, both major and minor, alive against the competition of the more popular commercialized culture of our day. And he is of course aware of the increased burden laid upon post-primary school teachers by the raising of the leaving age and the consequent influx into their classes of a larger less highly selected minority. Like Professor Gordon (*The Teaching of English*), and for a similar reason, he looks no farther than to the post-primary school; and like him he raises from its unquiet grave the ghost of my former more active self. King Charles's head. If this is all much ado about nothing, well. If not, the post-primary teacher should have a greater measure of assistance than at present he has. Too much of his time and strength must be spent in a discouraging if not an altogether losing fight against outside influences. All that the schools have ever been able to do—but it is all they need to do—is to attempt to give their pupils a sound literary taste, a judgment and sense of values that will enable them to distinguish between the good, the not so good, the poor, and the straight-out bad. It was never easy; now, when it appears to be more than ever necessary, it has become more than ever difficult. Sound taste and judgment formed, the adult may with greater safety be left to exercise his democratic right of choice. But remembering that appetite grows by what it feeds on, the time (to change the metaphor) for laying the foundations is in childhood, childhood not adolescence. In adolescence they may be strengthened and confirmed. I believe that more literature is finding its slow way into the primary schools than say forty years ago; I am equally sure that the process should be speeded up. And by literature I mean classical literature—not exclusively, of course, but classical literature nevertheless. I mean Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, Bunyan, Dickens, Scott. Specialist teachers would be needed: this should not be beyond the power of educational authorities to arrange . . . Rest, rest, perturbed spirit. But I do not speak without the book.

To conclude: this is I think a useful piece of work. Perhaps no questionnaire can be framed to elicit anyhow but roughly the information desired, and, as Mr Scott is the first to admit, the results of this one are too often inconclu-

sive. But it is well to have them set down in black and white; and the book may serve as a landmark for future investigators.

Helen M. Simpson

PARADISE LOST AND ITS CRITICS. A. J. A. Waldock. *Cambridge University Press.* 8/6.

LET US first clear the ground for controversy. This book, by the Professor of English at Sydney University, is an excellent one, and a most notable contribution to the modern conflict in Miltonic criticism. It is written—in the main, but not entirely—as a rebuttal to C. S. Lewis's *A Preface to Paradise Lost*. Whereas Mr Lewis, basing himself on hints from Charles Williams, tried to rescue Milton from his detractors by reasserting the essential unity of the poem—a unity which must be dependent on the validity of the central myth—Professor Waldock judges the attempt to be gallant, but vain. For him, *Paradise Lost*, as the total expression of an idea, fails at its centre. The myth of the Fall makes demands on the reader that are in themselves irreconcilable: 'it requires us, not tentatively, not half heartedly . . . but with the full weight of our minds to believe that Adam did right and simultaneously requires us with the full weight of our minds to believe that he did wrong. The dilemma is as critical as that, and there is no way of escape.' (p. 56). Moreover, things are made worse by reason of Milton's overliteral directness (in contrast to Dante's more subtle veilings) in handling his inherently intractable material. Satan is the touchstone. By the very nature of the theme, says Professor Waldock, he must be the only active character in the poem, and thereby must gain our interest and sympathy; but likewise, he must necessarily be defeated and humiliated. So we have two Satans: the great anarch of the opening books and the merely sinister tempter of the later scenes; and the two are not the same—'we cannot make the crossing imaginatively' (p. 82). God, too, is judged insufficient—but there is general agreement on that.

We are left then, with a *Paradise Lost* that is a massive ruin: awesome in its parts, enriched by the incidental gran-

deur of the poetry, but not acceptable as *Lear* is acceptable —as the fully co-ordinated imaginative statement of a myth inherently valid. 'That is why *Paradise Lost* does not profoundly trouble, profoundly satisfy us, in the manner of great tragedy: it cannot, because of that embedded ambiguity at the heart of it.' (p. 145.)

Professor Waldock has made out his case well. The bare outline I have given does small justice to the cogency and completeness of his argument, which is carried on with the same unpretentious clarity of mind, the same dislike of humbug, and the same pertinacity as we have learned to admire in his study of *Hamlet*. If I spend the rest of my space in disagreeing with him, it is not because I do not respect his argument, but because I respect Milton's more.

The dispute is one of critical method, not application. Granted his premises, Professor Waldock is invincible; but the premises can be questioned. They are expressed with a simplicity that is, surely, a little deceptive. For instance: 'If we are ever to see the poem as it really is, our impressions, surely, are what we must first and last attend to.' (p. 26). 'First', yes—necessarily, since we work through them; but 'last' as well? Can we accept that what a poem 'really' *is*, is only the sum of our 'impressions'? If we do, we are led straight into the defeatism inherent in all criticism that is merely intuitive—and there are signs of such defeatism, I fancy, in Professor Waldock's remarks on the poetry of the poem in his final chapter, where we are told that it makes 'very little difference to what is there' whether we call the Miltonic manner a 'grand style' or a 'rumble' (p. 139). Personal impressions must be checked, first and foremost, by a recovery of the author's intentions, which, in a past author, may be very different from what one initially expects. Of course, the recovery of such intentions does not complete the critical task—and Professor Waldock is probably right in suggesting that Mr Lewis sometimes weakens his case by regarding 'what a poem is meant to be' as identical with 'what a poem is'. At the same time, there is a corresponding weakness in his own method, which tends to regard 'what a poem is' as identical with 'what I feel it to be': in other words, over-emphasis on the personal impression leads to a certain impatience, a reluctance to try to come to terms with an author on his own ground.

To my mind, Professor Waldock's criticism has precisely

this weakness. To put it briefly, he tends to demand of *Paradise Lost* the virtues one demands of a novel—in fact, he speaks at some length (p. 18) of the 'enormous store of precedents' for judgment of literary technique with which the novel has provided us—and, above all, he demands the same kind of consistency in character presentation that is essential in the traditional novel. This is to fly in the face of a principle that is basic to all Renaissance criticism—that different kinds of literature demand different kinds of excellence. *Paradise Lost* is a poem; and the primary virtue of a poem does not lie, in my conception, in an 'appeal to common sensibilities'—not, that is, in the sense in which Professor Waldock seems to employ that rather ambiguous phrase—but in the effectiveness of total imaginative design, of which human behaviour is only a part. A poem, that is, is not primarily representational as a novel is; and Professor Waldock reveals his sympathy with representationalism (and his lack of sympathy for the Miltonic pattern) by his constant assumption that wherever the poem draws near to allegory it becomes inferior. Yet it can be held that poetry, in its essence, is more of an allegory than anything else; at least, it is indisputable that behind Milton lay a whole tradition of criticism (and criticism of the Renaissance, not only of the Middle Ages) that looked on allegory as the most important duty of poetry.

In *Paradise Lost* there is a special reason why human consistency on the line of the novel cannot be looked for: as Mr Lewis has pointed out, the characters in it are not human at all. They are superhuman or abhuman, and they have their own special kind of reality: and our first duty, as critics, is to try to understand that kind of reality, because the whole poem moves in terms of it. Nor can we, as Professor Waldock consistently tries to do, separate what Milton says about a character or a situation and what the character says or does 'of his own proper motion'. To do so—as Professor Waldock does for instance, when he says that Adam, at one moment 'merely mouths his author's theories of woman's place and function' (p. 42), as though everything about Adam were not 'merely' the mouthing of Milton—is to fall into the Bradleian error of assuming that a character has an existence independent of and outside the poem itself, outside the imaginative pattern of which the author makes him a part. Following out this trend of thought, we can

see that the link between the two Satans is to be sought, not in character-development, but in the development of the poem itself—the pattern of which Satan is but a part; and one element in that pattern is, as I have suggested elsewhere, the change in Satan that results from his being made to appear against the controlling backgrounds of darkness or light, falsehood or truth. The problem of the Fall is too complicated for present discussion. Here I find Professor Waldock a most subtle tempter, and am almost convinced—until I remember to put the ancestral pair against the cosmic background Milton gives them: and then, by contrast with the quiring concent of the universal harmony, their lapse seems a jarring discord, and I can hate and admire at once, in a way that Professor Waldock declares to be impossible.

Professor Waldock will, I am sure, find this criticism largely irrelevant, as directed not towards the 'real'—the impressionistic?—*Paradise Lost*, but towards that 'ghost epic' on which he feels so many of the modern critics are wasting their ingenuity. There is a difference of principle between us again. I should justify poetry on exactly those grounds: that, behind every poem, there is a ghostly irradiation of perfection of which the real poem is but an imperfect shadow, and that the very excellence of a poem depends on its nearer approximation to its *Doppelgaenger*. This will be humbug to Professor Waldock: but is it more objectionable than a critical position which, relying on a deceptively simplified 'commonsense' reduces a poem to the level of a novel, with verbal decoration spread over it as incidental icing?

I have concentrated on my disagreement with the book, for the issue—the greatness of our greatest epic—is an important one: but I do not wish to give an impression of total war. It is especially pleasing to see Professor Waldock sweeping away a lot of watery thinking about the 'meaning' of the poem, and in particular that which tries to interpret the Fall on the lines of post-Renaissance humanism. We are grateful to him and to Mr Lewis for putting the issues squarely and clearly before us. I hope he will be proved wrong: but if he is, the defeat will be an honourable one.

S. Musgrove

CORRESPONDENCE

To the editor of LANDFALL

Sir: If you can spare a little of *Landfall's* valuable space, I should like to be allowed to comment on Mr Baigent's review of *For the Rest of our Lives.*

It was refreshing to find that hybrid work treated with such forthrightness as the novel pure and simple which its author claims it to be. I thought this particularly useful as a complement to General Kippenberger's review in *The Listener,* which was written from the point of view of one who shared the campaigns which the book describes, and judged it principally by its faithfulness to history.

With Mr Baigent's estimate of the book as a novel it is difficult to disagree. But the critic's first business is, surely, to decide for himself into what category a work falls, and not simply to accept the author's claims for it at their face value. An author is not always the best judge of his own work, and he may quite easily deceive himself about what he is trying to do. I do not think it needs a very close reading of Mr Davin's somewhat wry, uncomfortable foreword to be made to feel that *For the Rest of our Lives* is not going to be a simple, straightforward novel; and his first few chapters confirm that feeling.

The plain fact is that the author's aims were confused. He wanted, at the conscious level, to write a novel: he had ambitions as a novelist. But his urge, the *exigence profonde* which Mr Baigent finds lacking, was to record. It was not, I think, entirely lacking; only it was not of the kind or was not so directed as to create a work of art. The artist must dominate his material. In Mr Davin's case his material dominated him. That is not discreditable to the man, but is was unfortunate for the artist; for it means that he was still so close to his experience that his conscious purpose could not control and shape it. The result is that, while a failure as a novel, the book has value of another kind, as a record, for which different criteria are required. The detail is very careful all through, but *everything* had to go in, significant or not; Mr Davin was so obsessed by what he saw and felt in Cairo and the desert that he could not bring himself to select, and throw away what was unimportant

for the novel. For example the battle scenes—especially in the first desert battle—ring true, and to the best of my knowledge are accurate as description; the soldiers' talk is good reporting (the novel however demands something more than this: invention); the authentic pidgin-Arabic verses—which would be quite unprintable translated—are pleasant in the memory and will be a treasure for historians. To get at all these it is worth following some of the dreary pseudo-intellectual chatter of Mr Davin's lay figures and their thin unsensual sex life.

Had Mr Davin chosen either to write a straight record, or to let his experience mature in memory before he attempted to transform it into a novel, we might have had a more coherent work. But perhaps he had to get everything down quickly—the public material which forms the record together with the private which should have ripened into the novel—before he could relieve himself of the burden of what he had been through. We may regret the necessity, but who shall dare to blame him? And his book, unsatisfying as a story, non-existent as a work of art, yet remains one which some at least of his fellow-soldiers will find absorbing in its account of scenes and events, and which may not be neglected by the historian.

Yours, etc.

S. D. Manson

Publications Received

John Buncle. *Of Wives and Wiving.* The Caxton Press. 7/6.

Ormond Burton. *Bart. The story of a Dog.* H. H. Tombs Ltd. 6/6.

Donald Cowie. *The Poetical Works.* Vol. I. The Tantivy Press, Malvern. 10/6.

Brian Elliott. *Singing to the Cattle. Essays in Australian Literature.* Georgian House, Melbourne. 8/6.

Creeve Roe. *Poetry by Victor Daley.* The Pinchgut Press, Sydney.

Arnold Wall. *Sir Hugh Walpole and his writings.* The Friends of the Turnbull Library, Wellington.

R. H. Ward. *The Figure on the Cross. A play.* S.P.C.K., London. 2/-.

Poetry. The Australian International Quarterly of Verse. Edited by Flexmore Hudson. No. 25, December, 1947. Melbourne. 2/-.

Notes on the Painters

EDWARD IMMYNS ABBOTT. He was one of the surveyors engaged by Kettle in 1846, and helped to survey the Taieri Plains. Hocken (*Contributions*) refers to him as a young man 'of considerable musical and artistic accomplishment', but little more is known about him. He died in 1849.

JOHN BUCHANAN. 1819-98. Born in Scotland, apprenticed to a pattern designer, and studied botany. Came to Otago 1849. Attached to the geological survey as botanist and draughtsman. His *Milford Sound* is reproduced in E. H. McCormick, *Letters and Art in N.Z.* See also G. H. Scholefield, *A Dictionary of New Zealand Biography.*

W. S. HATTON. He was painting in the fifties in both Auckland and Nelson, but except that he also painted two pictures of Dunedin in the sixties, which are now in the Hocken Library, nothing appears to be known about him.

GEORGE O'BRIEN. 1821-88. Born in County Clare, Ireland. Was in Australia in 1839. Arrived in Dunedin 1863 and settled there. Civil engineer and painter in water colour; worked as draughtsman for Lawson, the architect of First Church. One of the founders of the Otago Art Society. The Early Settlers Museum has a good collection of his work. See the note by John Harris to the catalogue of his work in the Hocken Library, 1945.

Notes on Contributors

JAMES K. BAXTER. Born in Dunedin 1926. Poetry: *Beyond the Palisade* (1944), *Blow Wind of Fruitfulness* (1948: both Caxton Press).

ROBERT W. BURCHFIELD. Born in Wanganui 1923. Served with the army in N.Z. and Italy 1941-6. Junior lecturer in English, Victoria University College.

LYNETTE CORNER. Born in Cromwell 1921. Has recently been in England and France. Works for the National Library Service in Wellington, and is film reviewer for *The Evening Post.*

DAN DAVIN. Born in Southland. N.Z. Rhodes Scholar 1936. Author of *Cliffs of Fall* and *For the Rest of our Lives* (novels), and *The Gorse Blooms Pale* (stories). Works at the Oxford University Press in Oxford.

A. R. D. FAIRBURN. Born in Auckland 1904 and still lives there. Visited England in the late twenties and the South Island in 1947. Poetry: *He Shall not Rise* (London, 1930), *Dominion* (1938) and *Selected Poems* (1943: both Caxton Press).

RUTH GILBERT. Born in Greytown 1917; now married and living in Wellington. Poems by her have appeared in *Art in New Zealand, The Evening Post,* and *New Zealand Best Poems.*

F. A. MAGUIRE. Born and lives in Feilding and is interested in the Feilding Community Centre. Has contributed stories to several journals.

R. A. K. MASON. Born 1905 and lives in Auckland. Poetry: *No New Thing* (1934), *This Dark will Lighten* (Caxton Press, 1941).

S. MUSGROVE. Professor of English, Auckland University College.

J. F. McDOUGALL. Born in Scotland 1918 and came to N.Z. 1925. Works in Adult Education in Auckland.

J. G. A. POCOCK. Born in London 1924 and came to N.Z. at the age of three. Assistant lecturer in History, Canterbury University College. Is on the executive of the Christchurch Film Society.

ARTHUR N. PRIOR. Born in Masterton 1914. Lecturer in Philosophy, Canterbury University College. Has contributed to *The New English Weekly, The Criterion, The Presbyter, Theology, The Australasian Journal of Psychology and Philosophy,* etc.

HELEN M. SIMPSON. Born in Wellington, studied in N.Z. and England. Lecturer in English, Canterbury University College, 1929-32, and since 1939 a member of the College Council. Author of *The Women of New Zealand* (Centennial Surveys).

CHARLES SPEAR. Born in Owaka, Otago, 1910. Since 1928 journalism, teaching, etc.

JOHN SUMMERS. Born in England 1916 and came to N.Z. as a child. Served overseas as an army medical orderly. Has been farm hand, builder's labourer, sawmill hand; at present working in a rubber factory. A frequent contributor to the literary page of *The Southland Times.*

HUBERT WITHEFORD. Born in 1921 and lives in Wellington. A collection of his poems is expected from The Pelorus Press.

NOTES

Now that *Landfall* is half-way into its second year, readers may be interested to have a note on its progress. When the first number appeared, one sober well-wisher gave it a year's life; at the end of that year, he pronounced it to be holding its own and no more. That describes the position fairly accurately, although not quite in the sense the writer meant.

It began cautiously. Eight hundred copies of the first number were printed: they sold out within a few weeks. Of later numbers, half as many again were printed, and the circulation settled at between one thousand and eleven hundred. At this figure, it now proves, *Landfall* can just keep going, provided costs of production do not rise; if its circulation falls much below this, it will not have a long life. But simply to keep going—to be kept going by its readers—is, for a literary journal today, to do famously.

Landfall's circulation is not confined entirely to this country. Following in the steps of Pember Reeves, Rutherford, Sir Peter Buck, George Nepia, Low, Rewi Alley, Lofty Blomfield, Mr John Platts-Mills and other celebrated New Zealanders, it carries the light abroad to every quarter of the world (almost every quarter)—and, be it noted, without exporting any brains.

That light has not, it seems, gone quite unobserved. Unexpected manuscripts have arrived from Australia, England, America, even France. Unfortunately it has not been possible to consider them, because *Landfall's* first aim is to be what it says it is, a New Zealand quarterly, presenting the work of New Zealand writers. It has little enough space to do this; it has no space, at present, to do more than this.

In december last year it was stated in these Notes that when the Government established the State Literary Fund it invited the P.E.N. to nominate three members of the advisory committee. This implied that the Government was the prime mover in the matter. Such was not the case; on the contrary, as its Honorary Secretary has now pointed out, it was the P.E.N. which approached the Government with a plan for the Fund, which was lated adopted in a modified form. It is to be regretted that the P.E.N. was not given here the credit which is undoubtedly due to it.

BLACKWOOD PAUL

ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF SOCIALISM

'Political Labour's struggle towards socialism is dependent upon Mill's hypothesis that mankind shall continue to improve.

H. V. Evatt, *Australian Labour Leader: the story of W. A. Holman and the Labour Movement.*

We have learnt our votes and are going forward to fine old fig tree.

A. R. D. Fairburn, *The Sky's a Limpet.*

It is a favourite complaint that politicians, no matter how definite their principles in opposition, in office usually become complete opportunists. The slogans and perorations of ministers might well have been prepared years before in prospect of high dignity, so remote are they from the practice of government. Perhaps the responsibilities of administration leave little time for politicians to compose speeches; and every now and again the minister, like the parson, reveals that he is preaching from sermon notes made when he was a missionary years ago.

He does it not only because it is easy, but also because his congregation has a taste for the familiar. But there are always serious-minded people who detect differences between the creeds of a party and its practice; and in the New Zealand Labour Party there are plenty of the serious-minded and many occasions for complaint.

Whenever a labour politician in New Zealand changes his mind he is—to continue our metaphor—likely to be up for heresy if he lets it be noised abroad among the faithful. He is not likely to leave politics altogether or go over to the conservatives, or, still less, openly proclaim that he has changed his mind. He is much more likely to try to conceal from his left hand what his right hand is about. Change is, in fact, likely to be much more obvious in his deeds than his words. It is therefore understandable that he should be criticized not for change of mind but for being a traitor or

a coward or something in between and not much better.

Left Criticism of its Leaders

Apart from the Walsh report and a few statements and many silences, first by Mr Savage and then by Mr Fraser and Mr Nash, there is little in the statements of New Zealand cabinet ministers or labour leaders inside or outside Parliament to imply that a change of mind or of political principles has been experienced by the leaders of the Labour Party. Left wing critics, therefore, tend to infer that old age or social or financial pressures have been responsible for the undoubted disparity between old protestations and present practice. Unlike London's, Wellington's drawing rooms have no duchesses wherewith to blandish local Ramsay Macdonalds. Nor is there much evidence that good wines and specious conversation have weakened the integrity of labour cabinet ministers. It is proper of course not to minimize the attraction offered by inertia to the ageing public man, all the more deadly a temptation if as an elder statesman he has a long record of devoted service to the party behind him; if he bore the heat and burden of the day, forfeited financial aggrandisement for the cause, and perhaps lived in actual want. It is forgotten that the proper place for the veteran actor is not the spot-light but the stalls.

And yet the embraces of duchesses, the adulation of flatterers, the inertia and complacency of old age, the temptations and corruptions of high office do not entirely explain the frequent dissatisfaction of working class theorists with the leaders of Labour Governments. When everything that can be alleged against human weakness under temptation has been said, it remains too much to swallow that all who have been labelled traitors and self-seekers deserve these taunts. One hesitates to accept the facile anti-labour generalization (so glibly rehearsed to excuse the undoubted time-server indifferently with the rest) that, with office, comes the hard realization that visionary schemes are not practicable 'while human nature is what it is'. The evidence nevertheless does suggest that the problems of transition to socialism baffle and dismay the confident socialist leader and indeed give him pause. As in the Tuscan army facing Horatius, 'Those behind cry "Forward!" And those before cry "Back!".' In spite of the oddness and importance of this behaviour singularly little thought has been given to

it, and it may therefore be worth while to set down the opinions of an interested observer.

Evidence of Change

There is no doubt that the political attitudes of the leaders of the Labour Party have changed considerably. Mr Savage, even before he came to office, tried to shape the policy of his socialist party to find favour with a largely non-socialist electorate.* The old socialist doctrines survived on the soap box, in the utterances of the rank and file of the parliamentary party, and even in the rank and file of the cabinet; but you will not find frequent echoes from their old phraseology in the speeches of the present Prime Minister or of Mr Nash. Some few trade union leaders shared in these changes. There are few better illustrations of the extent of the change than Mr F. P. Walsh's celebrated report to the Federation of Labour. Mr Walsh said among other things:

'The labour movement is interested in improving its conditions and in raising the real standard of living. Strange as it may seem to some people, there is no conflict between these ideals and the benefit of the whole community. If the movement succeeds in improving the real standard of living, it benefits not only itself but the whole country. But there is only one way in which these ideals can be realized—and that is by the production of more goods and services. We must not lose sight of this fundamental economic principle, because everything else depends on it . . . The battle for minimum wages and living standards for workers has been fought and won. We are now past that stage. It is now a question of the distribution of the flow of goods and services which form the real income of the community. Unless the goods and services are being produced, it is not possible to distribute them. It is labour's responsibility to work for the maximum production of goods and services and anything which stands in the way of this is contrary to the best interests of the movement.'

These statements do not specifically contradict all that has

* The word socialism is used in this article to denote an organization of society in which economic as well as political machinery is directly in the hands of the state. And those who favour such a system are called socialists, whatever method they favour for inaugurating socialism or maintaining it. The word is obviously used rather differently in the quotations from Borkenau later.

previously been said by the Labour Party about the relations of capital and labour, but they do take for granted a complete change of attitude. In fact, they may be felt, even by some who think them mainly reasonable, to show a somewhat naive confidence in the ability of the Government to make sure that the extra fruits of industry, made possible by harder work, will not be misappropriated by the employer. It is certainly strange, and must have seemed bewildering to his audience of trade unionists, that Mr Walsh did not emphasize that these statements are true only if price control and other safeguards are effectively implemented.

Mr Walsh's omission does suggest an almost incredible ignorance of the state of mind of the trade union movement as a whole and does something to justify the often repeated charge that labour leaders are out of touch with the mass of their followers.

The Mental Climate

Let us look for a moment at the mental climate in which the majority of Labour Party supporters live and into which Mr Walsh threw his report. I mean by supporters the large group of more or less politically conscious workers who have been, and are, the main advocates of the cause of labour among their fellows, and from whom labour's most loyal support has come. The group is numerically by no means large and it may be decreasing. It does not include either middle class voters or those who, as a matter of family habit, vote labour, but who have scarcely acquired even the slogans of the party.

The air these people breathe is not necessarily the atmosphere of the labour movement in its days of hardship and self-sacrifice; nor do they speak continually the language of *The Maoriland Worker* and *The New Zealand Worker.* But some savour of the old days remains. There is now (even less than then) no coherent and consistent body of doctrine, but a medley of ideas springing from various roots, William Morris and the English socialists, Karl Marx, the American I.W.W., the British I.L.P. and the Fabians.

The new climate is essentially a mild one. It is many years since the labour movement either on its political or industrial sides was asked for blood, tears or sweat. Comfortable doctrines have been selected for special emphasis. The necessity of responsibility has been slurred. On every

soap box in the past and in every column of the labour press, and in the speeches of back benchers in the present, special attention has been, and is, paid to scapegoats. Sometimes it has been ' the system and not the individual ', sometimes the bankers or the newspapers or capitalists in general; but almost always there has been a good deal more concentration on the evils of the wrong-doer (whether a person or personified into a system) than on plans for putting things right. Most of this abuse has at some time or another been justified; but emphasis on the shortcomings of others has had obviously unhealthy effects on the morale of labour supporters.

Two streams of ideas in their minds can be usefully distinguished. The one derives from the wish to reform capitalism, the other from the wish to overthrow it. The industrial fight, with its pressure by the organized working class for better hours, conditions and wages, later supported by Labour Governments, is essentially a fight to tame and reform capitalism. It may, of course, be thought of as an attempt to tame it, temporarily, pending the reorganization of society; but for the most part those who want to reform capitalism by political or industrial pressure want the system to work in the present with reasonable certainty, whatever may be their ambitions for the future. Many take little heed of the future as long as their material needs are reasonably met in the present; and there is little question that the struggle, at least over the long term, has resulted in improved standards of living for the workers. For that reason many tend to be complacent.

Then there is the man whose thoughts are set on socialism. His desire for an overthrow of capitalist society may have varied roots. Sometimes he is merely conscious of having failed to fit into contemporary society and anxious for a society which would give him fairer play. But usually his feeling that capitalist society is an unjust order is uppermost. The socialist's desire for justice, vague in its conceptions though it may be, has been the moral mainspring of the labour ' movement.' This is so even when moral motives are most earnestly disclaimed. ' If we analyse,' says Professor Niebuhr in *Moral Man and Immoral Society,* ' the attitudes of the politically self-conscious worker in ethical terms, their most striking characteristic is probably the combination of moral cynicism and unqualified equalit-

arian social idealism which they betray.'

I have distinguished two groups of people, but in fact the two groups of ideas are inextricably mixed. The genuine socialists for instance often have ideas about making capitalism work, for the workers' benefit, in the transition period. And those who are not interested in socialism, but very much in their hours and their pay envelopes, also, on occasion, talk language appropriate only for an animal which cannot be tamed and must be destroyed. Nearly all wish to have the best of both worlds. They permit themselves the luxury of moral indignation, but regard moral appeals as so much humbug. It is most common to find people believing that capitalists are the root of all evil and the fount of all human selfishness and error and therefore should be shackled and restrained, but that getting tough with the capitalists by taxing them more heavily will solve most financial problems; in fact that the welfare of the worker depends almost entirely on wresting more wealth from the boss. Gross exaggeration by the propagandist of the extent to which further taxation of higher incomes could save the taxpayer lower down, produces sometimes cynical fellows who see no point in socialism when 'soaking the rich' will provide handsome competences for all the workers 'if only we had honest men in power.' This is not the only Labour Party talking point which has been so exaggerated as to become positively misleading. Socialist propagandists also, in pointing to those lamentable and scandalous stories of capitalist 'over production' such as the burning of coffee in Brazil, have too often implied that the problem of production is solved and that only the problem of distribution remains.

Here is a sentence from a leading article in *The Standard* (18 March, 1948): 'Disruptive industrial tactics, which, if practised to excess, can only have the effect of dragging the nation down into chaos, only damage the reputation of the workers.' In this one sentence are distilled all the hesitations of the labour movement, balancing the slogans of one generation against those of another. Disruption is still a holy word, but it must not now be 'excessive.' The 'reputation of the workers' (presumably with the middle-class) must not now be damaged. The working class had once no country, but now the nation must not be dragged 'down into chaos.'

This mental climate is certainly not propitious for further steps towards socialism. Socialism with democracy demands responsibility at all levels in a way which the imperfectly functioning mechanisms of capitalism do not require. Socialism, especially if it is to avoid substituting the ballyhoo of ' heroes of the revolution ' for the ballyhoo of advertising under capitalism, demands an adult sense of duty to the community. There are, of course, not wanting people who claim that, if only the Government advanced more speedily to socialism, it would light in New Zealand a fire that the workers would not willingly let out. In fact there is little reason to believe that any considerable heightening of working class morale would follow, say, the nationalization of further industries, even if it were accompanied by democratic control in industry and by the setting up of autonomous democratic organizations with due attention to decentralization. The dissatisfaction and cynicism which nineteenth century employers made inevitable for the workers has become deeply rooted alike in those who work for capitalists and those who work for the state. (And socialist high priests have been at hand to pronounce absolution in the holy name of trade union principles for those who feel qualms of conscience about idleness, tardiness and dereliction of duty to the community.) The resentments of the working man at his former status remain to embitter his relations with the state as employer. It is time that such attitudes were changed, and the extension of democratic controls is one obvious way towards such changes. But for various reasons (about which there will be more to be said) no quick and easy conversion to responsible and adult behaviour is likely. At worst, 'labour' ideas have become merely the rationalization of native indolence, to the great disservice of those who still crusade for socialism.

It is usual for socialists to claim that 'education' is what is needed and to mean by education the further duplication of such pap, scapegoat-mongering and guidance on sporting events as is offered in *The Southern Cross* and even more in *The Standard*. Merely to amplify the many voices which proclaim easy versions of the labour gospel is no remedy.

Nor has the Labour Party's left wing been much help. Vilified by Mr Fraser as communists—and therefore not worth arguing with—certain of its members, by their con-

tinuing preoccupation with Russia to the neglect of local problems, do give pretext for the abuse that is heaped on them.* All too many left wingers try like gadflies to sting the drowsy labour animal into action, and are no more clear than gadflies what course the enraged beast is supposed to pursue, once he is roused. Although the more intelligent recognize the irresponsibility of some union activity they are unwilling to criticize the militant. To be militant whatever the issue or the occasion is, in the view of the left, the mark of a genuine labour man, as distinguished on the one hand from the careerist making a good thing out of the Labour Party or the hair-splitting intellectual backing away from the implications of socialism.

The left wing, which should be trying to decide what justice is and pushing the Government (in spite of all temptations) towards justice, rather than towards appeasement of the unions with the loudest voices, is so busy proving that it is militant and anti-bourgeois and closely in communion with the warm pulsing hearts of the workers, that it spends most of its time abusing the Government for being tools of the capitalists. And anyone who speaks of shortcomings among the workers gets contemptuously dismissed. The group-loyalty of the workers, learned, necessarily and defensively, in an unrestrained capitalist society, can

* This behaviour lends colour to the charges so often made that all militant union activity is now entirely communist-inspired. The communists have an obvious double motive for leading discontent in industry, first, because they want to immobilize capitalism anyhow and, secondly, because they are keen to immobilize a community which is likely to feed, if not to fight for, the Western Bloc. But the repetition of such charges, with their implication that trade union dissatisfaction with wages and conditions is always wrong, is likely to increase the influence of the communists, who are thus able to pose as the only leaders of the working class. It may be that the charges are, with newspaper assistance, becoming more justified. But it is in fact clear that a number of working class groups feel (some with justice) that they have cause for complaint without any prompting from the communists. Carpenters, for instance, seem to have done rather worse than watersiders and coal miners in the struggle for better pay. Nor is it sufficient, to reject their claim, to point out the existence of certain tribunals competent to hear their case, when those tribunals have been so often by-passed or when the claims of the skilled man for extra reward are outside the powers of tribunals and depend on government policy. It has now become difficult (though it remains no less important) to recover prestige for regular methods of settling industrial disputes. At present industrial dissatisfaction is treated as either vicious, unjustified, traitorous and communist-inspired, or as a righteous protest at the wrongs of the much-tried but patient toiling masses.

degenerate (and at times has degenerated) into mere gangsterism.

A communist answer to all difficulties, of course, might be that if relatively easy conditions continue the old discipline of fear at losing a job would have to be replaced by a new discipline, direction by 'the community'. The communist is sometimes accused of expecting too much of human nature. In fact he takes a low view of human attitudes, at least in the corrupted state in which he sees them emerging from capitalism. In the beginnings of his brave new world he would therefore see that fear keeps many of the workers at work, and that incentive payments encourage them to higher endeavours. The communist claims to be realistic and it is easy to see elements of realism here. But to be so realistic as to despair of moral values may be merely to abandon all hope of effective action. The communist really rests his hope of energizing the working class on the moral fervour of communist leadership. It may well be that the Social Security Paradise has not sufficient rigours to produce hardy party leaders.

Even if able leadership were available it is very doubtful whether New Zealanders would be prepared to follow a communist lead. Democratic prejudices against dictatorship would in practice count less than they should, but would count for something. More important (and it is, after all, the quality of our defects), that sentimental optimism, which at present hinders the democratic extension of socialism, would equally thwart anyone who tried to inflict it on us by force. The sentimentality of the late Mr Savage is written indelibly across the beliefs of labour; but the lullaby with which Mr Savage soothed his people, 'we don't want to hurt anybody', has moderated the passions aroused by political argument. New Zealanders would need to be shown good reason before they started a local shooting war. They are at once too soft and too sensible to want socialism at such a price.

But the recurrence of a catastrophic crisis of the 1931 dimensions is possible, and in fact looks like the communists' only hope.* In the present credulous state of the Labour Party mind the workers might then follow the communists.

* It is perhaps significant that the Russian economist Varga fell into disrepute at least temporarily, because he doubted the imminence of a capitalist crisis.

It is also possible that they might follow some semi-fascist movement which made more extravagant promises.

Left wing labour people often lament lost chances in 1936. Then, they argue, labour could have carried through a vast programme of nationalization with substantial public support. Yet, apart from the not trifling fact that the party had no mandate from the electors for such changes (and could not easily have got one), the dependent status of the New Zealand economy would probably have prevented such changes at that time. And there is another and more fatal objection. Privation and inequality of sacrifice in the depression years did produce much political activity on the left which has subsided since. But it has always seemed doubtful to me whether desperate men, any more than contented men, will freely submit to rigorous long-term remedies involving revolutionary changes in the social structure and possible self-sacrifice for themselves, if obvious short-term remedies are at hand—as they were in 1936.

Desperate men wanting a revolution are no more likely to establish the good society than reasonably contented men feeling responsibility for their neighbours; but for the moment one must beg the question how responsibility may be inculcated.

Controlled Capitalism and its Problems

Labour Party leaders are thus driven to the conclusion that, in the present state of mind of their followers, further steps towards socialism by democratic means are difficult. They believe, moreover, that non-democratic changes are neither possible nor desirable; and so they are driven to a policy of controlling capitalism. It is a change of mind, but it is not indefensible, provided that those who make it act with candour and have some purpose beyond the mere desire to retain power. In fact there has been a lack of candour, and while it is not disputed that power has been used mainly with the intention of advancing or safeguarding the interests of the workers, or some section of them, there is certainly often doubt whether the Government knows what it is about.

In some moods it professes to be trying still (as it tried during the war) merely to maintain the status quo in society. This is a difficult enough policy to follow even when all groups agree to it in principle. At best it can be but the crystallization of one episode in the struggle of economic

groups for position. Nor is it certain that stabilization was ever intended as a permanent policy. Clearly it enables only postponement of the issues. A government ought to know not only that it has to exercise control but what are the objects of control; it ought to have ideas about justice, even if the exigencies of capitalist organization (which it must maintain) compel it to allow some business men twice the income of university professors. Sometimes the exigencies of capitalism do not apply and it can be bolder;* but it must have a definite policy in any case. It must have thought about needs, about the inducements needed for higher education, about the additional rewards of craftsmanship, about inducements to real enterprise. Unless it has, it cannot control capitalism effectively. It will be pushed by the most powerful unions in one direction and buffeted by the employers in another. And further, it must have an idea of what it means by the good life. It might, for instance, consider differentiating culture from luxury in its taxation policy.

It would be foolish to minimize the difficulties of controlling the capitalist. There are on the other hand the dangers. underlined too often by the conservative to need emphasis, that private enterprise, if too much controlled, will cease to be enterprising, that if taxation is too high the capitalist will go to golf in the afternoon instead of spending it in the office thinking out new schemes of making more money (and incidentally benefitting the community) by rationalizing his factory. But there is no evidence that these problems are insoluble.

There is indeed danger that they may be solved along one line which the Government, whatever the employees think, must necessarily find unsatisfactory. It is likely that we may find unions and employers getting together and holding the rest of the people (the consumers) to ransom. In fact something very like that kind of pressure is to be seen in the high wage industries working on a 'cost plus' system, which have defied stabilization in matters of wages and are happily drawing a percentage on all the money they waste.

Motives to Industry under Capitalism

But how is the worker who has been told so often that

* The latest British budget suggests that Sir Stafford Cripps has thought about these matters.

capitalism is the enemy to be induced to co-operate in controlled capitalism? It remains and will remain a problem as long as capitalist organization lasts. For however attractive conditions of work in industry are made, even if too-facile abuse of the capitalist as capitalist goes out of fashion (as it should), it will still be a source of grievance that the factory owner has three cars and the worker none. And that grievance will be only partly mitigated by explaining that if the boss's inducements are reduced the wheels of industry will run down to the detriment of employee and community alike.

Yet unconvincing as it may at first sight appear, a moral appeal might do at least something to reduce the wastage of human energy due to the whipping up of unreasonable resentments and the easy scapegoat making which is the commonplace of left-wing propaganda. Moral appeals, once a mainstay of labour propaganda, have faded a little. Prudential appeals, appeals to group solidarity, appeals to vindictiveness and to natural pride in our superior social order have largely taken their place. The ebbing sense of responsibility, the increasing sense of being a beneficiary in most labour supporters' minds, is partly due to concentration on utilitarian and mystical doctrines which stress participation in a movement rather than action as individuals.

It was natural that the nineteenth century worker should have regarded exhortations to hard work as so much hypocritical nonsense. In the days of unrestrained industrial struggle moral judgments against the worker, whatever his indolence, could scarcely be maintained. History (not the socialists) originally taught the worker to give as little and get as much as he could. But the intervention of the state with restrictions on hours, minimum wages, and above all its assumption of the duty to secure full employment, should really have changed the picture. A government of controlled capitalism can fairly claim to speak again in moral imperatives. For state intervention in industry does make the state a partner, more or less effective, in capitalist enterprise.

It is perhaps surprising to have to accuse the present Prime Minister of failure to point a moral; and it is of course true that Mr Fraser very frequently treats the workers to a diatribe—often vindictively phrased—against 'wreckers' and communists. But the moral appeal, although present,

is swamped in a mixture of abuse and sentimental appeals to loyalty, with lashings out at this idle and perverse generation. The Prime Minister is only too ready to lecture the workers, but he is rarely willing to correct, in moderate language, errors which indeed were common at one time both to himself and to his hearers.

'The Challenge to New Zealand Labour'

The main response of the workers to Mr Fraser and Mr Walsh may well be bewilderment. Those brought up on the proposition that 'there is an absolute antagonism between the interests of the proletariat and of the bourgeoisie' are suddenly without explanation faced with Mr Walsh's apparent contradiction. 'It is labour's responsibility to work for the maximum production of goods and services . . .' Is it to be wondered at that these leaders are called, on the left, traitors to the movement, and that their moral appeals are still further discredited by this unexplained volte-face? But if Mr Walsh and Mr Fraser have caused confusion and bewilderment, it does not mend matters for an apologist to assert that all doctrines spoken by the faithful from all soap boxes, election platforms or Prime Ministers' seats whatsoever are not inconsistent but can be reconciled. A task of this kind is attempted by Mr Dudley Seers in a pamphlet published in 1946 and called *The Challenge to New Zealand Labour*. He is occupied mainly with persuading the workers to work hard and so ensure 'full production,' and he tries to do this without disturbing the party's sacred beliefs. He is a convinced socialist and says that he is calling merely for a temporary policy of collaboration with capitalism until public opinion approves socialism, but his attempt to reconcile his appeal with current Labour Party ideas makes his task impossible.

The capitalist (he points out to the workers) is as much a robber as any communist ever claimed. It is still not wrong not to work hard for him. But it is expedient that you should. And if you do work hard the Government will see that the capitalist gets away with only a proportion of the loot, leaving the remainder to be used for your benefit. Later on we intend to clap him in irons (after notice and compensation), but meantime he is too useful for us to scrap him. The implication is (though Mr Seers does not draw it) that the workers are not up to the job of organizing the country without the capitalists' assistance, because capitalist

values have so corrupted their that they are quite deaf to moral suasion.

There is much in his argument, but it is clearly objectionable on two counts. First his case is incomplete. He has in fact nothing but pious hope to offer that people who are not now ready for socialism will ever be ready for it. The temptations of security offered from the left and of greed offered from the right are not likely to lose their effect. Nor can the working class, in their present state of mind, be expected to be aroused to prodigies of effort through such appeals as the Walsh report, which contradict the foundations of their belief. Merely self-regarding prudence may question whether any extra effort made or inconvenience suffered will not be turned mainly to someone else's advantage. A properly organized society will provide expedients such as piece-work schemes to make sure that such fears are mitigated. But a properly responsible individual will, particularly where the state protects him from the rigours of capitalism, recognize some duty to the rest of the community. Too many socialists have played duty down, and been content to wait for the inevitable revolution to march on. They are likely to find that selfishness and greed are vitiating factors not confined to one group, and a liability to any organization of society.

Once that discovery is made a more honest and perhaps more realistic appeal is possible. A socialist could say this: 'To improve your position you workers have been compelled to carry on a struggle with the employer. You have enlisted, with some success, the aid of the state, and your position is now much stronger than before. But in the struggle the quality of your work has suffered. You feel little duty towards the boss, but because socialism is not yet here you see no obligation to work for the welfare of the whole. For this reason (and because of original sin), even when you are working directly for a Labour Government, those of you who are railwaymen and the like are sometimes able only to reproduce the pattern of discontent and half-hearted interest in work which has become your standard practice when working for a boss who is making a profit out of you. You have perhaps vaguely heard indeed of the exhortations of Mr Walsh about hard work, but you have written his utterances off as those of yet another renegade to labour. Such doctrine is in any case unfamiliar and unsup-

ported by the bulk of your union leaders. You have become so suspicious of appeals based on the traditional virtues of industry and altruism that most appeals now are made to your greed. (One result has been, as we shall see, that a narrow nationalism has become your characteristic foreign policy.) In fact the only vestige of social feeling left in you is, one sometimes suspects, your realization of the duty of solidarity in your own particular union.

'Breaches are opening between those of you who are unskilled and those in the skilled trades, and an even wider breach between all of you and the middle group of voters who carry your Government's fate in the hollow of its hand. But you are too much concerned with your beer and racedays and extra butter ration to see. It is no use telling you that the capitalist is as wicked as ever, but that you must work hard for him because the Government has him on a chain. We must tell you, and it is for the sake of truth as much as tactics, that wickedness is not the prerogative of capitalists. That in fact you must stomach this—the infirmities of your own behaviour, some of them induced by capitalism itself, but some aggravated by anti-capitalist propaganda, some of them worsened by the social service state in which you take much but do little, are making it more and more difficult, not only for the present Labour Government to control capitalism in your interests, but for any government to transfer the whole economy to socialism. That you who care most for socialism must be willing to attack the immoral worker along with the immoral capitalist—attack, in fact, the immorality of people in that state of life in which an imperfect world has landed them, rather than the immorality of capitalists.'

It is perhaps too much to expect that an explicit lead of this kind will come from cabinet ministers. Self-righteous belabouring of the workers for acting on beliefs advocated every week in *The Standard* is a habit of the present Prime Minister; it is not a good habit and does not help. A recantation of old errors is needed and perhaps it is little use expecting confessions of past mistakes from a politician. But it is unlikely that unless the politicians throw their weight unmistakably on the side of realism anything much will be done. The task would be worth recommending to the intellectuals in the Labour Party.

It is of course to be feared that public controversy in the Labour Party may do little good. Arguments between right

and left wing labour too often tend to lose the realities of the New Zealand scene altogether and merely to reproduce the bitterness of the clash between the Western Bloc and the Soviet Union. And this unhappy situation is likely to continue as long as the communist can pose—as he can now—as the only defender of many doctrines to which most of the Labour Party pays lip service, so gathering round him those who are heirs of a militant labour movement but otherwise have little in common with Communist Party doctrine.

There is perhaps some sign that in England the supporters of the extreme left have modified their virulent objection to controlled capitalism. It is interesting to see a commentator as far to the left as Mr Maurice Dobb writing in 1946 in *Studies in the Development of Capitalism,* that history 'lends no credibility to the view that a capitalist society must pass through a period of legalised regimentation of labour . . . and that every development towards state capitalism today must have such things as its logical result. . . . For a period at least while mankind takes breath and its wounds are healing [state capitalism] has the inestimable advantage of commending itself to the good sense of the overwhelming majority of people, even though their social philosophies are very different.' Mr Dobb defines state capitalism as 'the co-existence of capitalist ownership and operation of production with a system of generalized controls over economic operations exercised by the State, which pursues ends that are not identical with those of an individual firm.' He also quotes Lenin and implies that in Lenin's view state capitalism may represent 'progress towards socialism'.

The criticism may be made that much popular support for the labour cause will be forfeited if the simple socialist gospel is tampered with even momentarily; the devil of capitalism is most terrifying in his simplest and crudest colours. But it is not clear that the preacher who intimidates his converts into the fold through fear of the torments of hell has really captured the most effective Christians. And there are times when honesty pays.

Foreign Affairs

The same elements of cynicism and irresponsibility and the same pre-occupation with soft and easy doctrine, which we have seen in the attitude of labour supporters to the domestic scene, are observable in their outlook on the world

overseas. The effects on the Labour Government have been equally crippling. Account must be taken of attitudes of long standing in the labour movement. First is the belief in 'socialism in one country'. The phrase is an odd one to use here but it seems clear that, along with some genuine international feeling and much parade of international sentiment by the Labour Party in opposition, the prevailing labour tradition has been in favour of a local nationalism in which the interests of the local working class matter above all; no one overseas matters much at all. The illiberal attitude of the party to immigration had of course a strong economic motive behind it and, while thoroughly understandable in the past, has left legacies of insularity and self-satisfaction which set limits to international co-operation.

The scapegoat-maker is also active in the field of foreign affairs. The old left-wing superstition (which must now be recognized for what it is) that armament manufacturers are mainly responsible for wars is still livelier than it should be in the Labour Party. The extent to which facile doctrine of this kind can be carried is seen in a recent editorial in *The Standard* in which responsibility for wars is placed on the shoulders of armament makers and other capitalists.

'Martyrs in the past (some of them are present leaders) have believed that war is engineered, invented by certain people for the purpose of extracting profits from the blood of man. The labour movement with few exceptions still holds these beliefs with as great a sincerity as ever in the past.' (18 March, 1948.) Whatever one's opinions on the justice of the last war, it is surely surprising to find the official organ of the labour movement suggesting by implication that a war in which its own Government was so deeply involved, a war in which labour leaders made such play of having united the country behind it in a 'magnificent war effort', was 'invented by certain people for the purpose of extracting profits from the blood of man'. The expression of such sentiments would, three years ago, have brought the constraint of the Labour Government speedily upon the writer. And, in fact, the Labour Government did persecute with considerable severity those who held similar beliefs (and some more intelligent ones) if they were unwilling to take part in a war. But the leader writer of *The Standard*, like so many of his colleagues in the party, goes on, untroubled by the changing face of life and policy, lisp-

ing those maxims and mouthing those curses which he learned by rote so many years ago.

Then we have a general scepticism about ' what one reads in the capitalist press '. The troubles of the outside world (and many unpleasant domestic matters) are minimized because in some obscure way it is suspected that an attempt is being made to distract attention from the wrongs of the workers here. This is the unfavourable mental climate in which suspicion and mild dislike of the foreigner is mingled with complacency and incredulity about bad news and a tendency to blame the armament manufacturers for troubles which loom too persistently on the horizon.

Since the foundation of the League of Nations, labour's enthusiasm for the rule of law in international affairs contrasted strongly with the apathy of the Reform Party and succeeding Governments. Critics of the party found its enthusiasm for international organization at its zenith in the days when Mr Litvinov was leading the battle for collective security. They have since seen that this belief in the rule of international law has persisted in the United Nations, often in defiance of Mr Molotov. The Labour Party's belief in our duty to participate in international affairs was no doubt in part due to a desire not to be tied too closely to a conservative government in Great Britain. But it was something more than that. There was also the belief that the growth of understanding between peoples as well as governments would mitigate the risk of war. There was some sense of duty to people beyond our own shores, shared more than is the case now by some of the party's rank and file.

New Zealand has of recent years been among the foremost in the defence of the rights of small nations.* This followed logically from her attachment to the League of Nations. At San Francisco, as well as before and since, Mr Fraser, although he has had much to say about rights, has had very little to say about duties. Since the war (as before it) the scope of international duty has been most complex; and at some moments the weight of anything that New Zealand could throw into the scales of generosity looked ludicrously trifling. But certain paths of duty were at least clear;

* There is a certain rigidity about this approach to international problems which makes one fear that the New Zealand delegation is trying to solve the problems of the last peace.

to give some comfort and refuge to a few of the victims of international disturbance (even if those few were chosen with an eye to their usefulness to our society), to make what efforts were possible to feed not only the rather hungry (in England) but the really starving (in Europe and Asia), and to cut down local consumption substantially as well as to increase production in order to achieve it. In fact local opinion mitigated the charge of selfishness by pious disclaimers of ability to give much succour to a suffering world. An unsympathetic policy towards Jews and displaced persons as prospective immigrants was justified on the ground that public opinion inside the country would object;* and the Minister of Health had the effrontery to say in 1946 that our generous rations were already bringing our children close to malnutrition. Many who would have been (they said) in the foremost ranks of 'aid to Britain' excused their dereliction of duty by lamenting the foolishness of the British in sending food to Germany. Not all the influence in these matters lay of course with the Labour Party. The influence of 'labour people' however was thrown all too often against refugees; and 'food for Britain' campaigns and voluntary saving of ration coupons (at a guess) raised less interest among working class than bourgeois households.† There are of course reasons for this. Many well-to-do families with access to a large variety of alternative foods—chicken every Sunday for instance—don't feel the pinch and can afford to be generous. But the 'let out' is not complete.

On the waterfront indeed there are indications that some trade unionists still think of foreign policy. The course of history seems to have vindicated the waterside workers who, seeing further than their Labour Government, refused to load scrap iron for Japan in 1937. And the watersiders, over Indonesia and over the Cook Islands, still show concern with maintaining labour's traditional policy of interest in

* There is justification for this belief; but it must be remembered that the only lead to public opinion came from the gutter press and the more irresponsible elements in the R.S.A. Government spokesmen were unworthily silent.

† 'Babbling about food for Britain' is a phrase of Mr Barnes, National President of the Watersiders' Union. It is true that the internationalism of those who have led such campaigns has marked limits; but at least they showed some appreciation of needs beyond New Zealand.

the welfare of native peoples—whatever the rights and wrongs of these particular issues. The recent refusal of the Prime Minister to allow the showing of a film setting out the Indonesian case appears, on the face of it, a particularly flagrant failure to live up to the principles he has espoused abroad. But it is fair to add that concern for the welfare of native peoples has also been shown by the Labour Government.

Yet in office the Labour Party has found it prudent to give up nearly all but the phrases of internationalism. (The parallel with so-called Soviet nationalism is perhaps not so absurd as it first appears.) The temptation to build a legend round the South Pacific Social Security Paradise for reasons of political safety was too strong. And then there was the war; the inevitable building up of local morale was so successful as to make for further exclusiveness. What is a foreigner? A man whom we are commanded to fight and kill during wars. In peace time we hardly meet one. The easy way to capture the public imagination was to set up a kind of shoddy local nationalism. True, this made it difficult to make any international gestures of real significance, but it didn't prevent Mr Fraser from talking in high-sounding general terms at international conferences, 'where the practical and immediate is never liked and general principles are the rage.'

On the home front we have seen evidence that the politicians have been immobilized by the doctrines that they have themselves done something to spread. Less blame perhaps belongs to them for the deterioration of Labour Party attitudes to international affairs. The worst that can be said is that they made no effort to check a strong trend which war, flag-wagging and our isolated position and consequent prejudice against foreigners had made inevitable. This supine attitude of the politicians and their failure to give a lead when a lead would have been possible are certainly open to censure. The much more generous attitude of the Australian Labour Government to European immigration makes it possible to respect Dr Evatt's right to speak on international affairs in a way it is not possible to respect Mr Fraser's. It is fair to add that New Zealand's lack of real concern for the outside world in practical matters has frequent parallels. 'Trade unions of the countries with the highest standard of living . . . have always

been conspicuous for their coolness in matters of international solidarity.' *

It is possible to discern too, in the workings of the public mind when it turns itself to foreign affairs, the effect of that scepticism about moral appeals which is characteristic of our time and has been encouraged by socialist propaganda. During war time that scepticism was somewhat lulled; but it has, since the peace, taken the form of an increasing inclination to write off as propaganda intended to distract minds from their socialist duty much of the unpleasant news which comes to us from abroad. The comparatively apathetic response to the appeals of Corso, the scandalous obstruction of the National Patriotic Fund Board which delayed the functioning of Corso for many months, would not have been possible if public opinion had really been roused. And for this Labour Party opinion must bear its share of blame.

The Issues between the Parties

It is the custom of the left to minimize the contribution of all but workers to the labour cause. It is interesting to quote Lenin in the rebuttal of such arguments. ' The working class ', he said, ' can evolve only a trade union consciousness . . . the doctrines of socialism grew up out of the philosophical and historical theories that were elaborated by the educated members of the propertied classes.'†

In New Zealand the intellectuals have never been a strong element of the labour movement, but the number of the intelligentsia who have taken an interest in left wing politics has noticeably declined since the war began. The increasing complexity of foreign affairs and the disappearance of an obvious left foreign policy are no doubt largely responsible. But there is another reason. The left is no longer necessarily the political choice of so large a proportion of the politically disinterested. Some men of goodwill the National Party has gathered to itself in spite of its obvious commercialism. They have landed there partly because there was no inducement to leave the gangsters they were born among and join gangsters of scarcely distinguishable morals in the Labour Party.

* Franz Borkenau, *Socialism, National or International*, p. 12.

† *Works*, Vol. V., p. 141. Quoted in Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society.*

This change may be not insignificant. The impatience of pressure groups may break the system of parliamentary government beyond repair if the parties do not learn to withstand them. The necessities of making an appeal to a broader section of the electorate, which is always felt with peculiar force by a party in opposition, have done a little to deliver the National Party from domination by groups. In the Labour Party there is a danger that the rule of the pressure group may become complete.

Order in the sense of preserving the status quo, order in the sense of shifting the benefits of society to their own side in accordance with the loudness of the cries emitted from their own pressure groups—these conceptions both parties understand. But to adjust the balance fairly between man and man, to do justice, not in accordance indeed with rigid equality, but with some respect to people's tastes and needs and with some regard to their services to society, is now a most important problem of government. It is a problem impossible of final solution under a government which—as even controlled capitalism must be—is committed to the support of capitalists at a level above most of the rest of the population. And it is a problem whose existence is scarcely even suspected by the National Party, while in the Labour Party only a few dimly apprehend its magnitude.

It would probably be for the public good if present leaders of labour, despite the confusions of the party's opinions, were to continue the administration of our controlled economy. The opportunism into which they have so often been forced may provide better precedents than the slogans of the National Party, which are far further removed than the Labour Party's from the facts of contemporary life.

Socialism and Capitalism

It must be admitted that in the past the case for socialism has often been considered established when a sufficiently damaging indictment has been presented against capitalism. Capitalism corrupts the employer by making material goods his only standard of value, and then encourages the employed to copy his vices and his vulgarity. The vagaries of capitalism in crisis have contributed enormously to the store of human misery. The inequalities of reward which capitalism prescribes makes difficult the functioning of any system of which it forms a part. The organization of capitalism has prevented the use of inventions of great value and it has

restricted the production of food when millions are starving.

All these add up to a hanging matter for capitalism, or at least a case for life-long restraint. Yet the case for socialism is not thereby affirmatively established. Positive assurances are necessary that new bureaucracy is not old business writ large. And while many life-long socialists are as ready as ever to give these assurances, they are not as unquestioningly accepted as ten years ago.

We need to go back to the purpose of it all—the good life. Should not a community choose the party which is concerned with the good life itself, and not merely with appeals (to socialism or to private enterprise) which make unproven claims of their ability to provide the good life?

Socialism has too often been a dream and not a means to an end. Franz Borkenau in a passage which combines overstatement with acute insight describes the coming of the planned economy to recent political life:

'The socialists themselves did not recognize the materialization of their own dream. . . . [The planned economy] has not come by way of a revolution with iron sandals on her heels . . . but in the dreariness of financial measures to meet an unexampled epidemic of unemployment; not to the strains of the Internationale, but to the sound of the Horst-Wessel song and the shoutings of coarse and brutal nationalists; not by the efforts of labour, but, at best, as a result of the emergence of moderate democratic leaders of the Roosevelt type, and at its worst as the victory of the Nazis; not as the advent of an era of equality, but with all the old inequalities perpetuated; not, in one word, as a fulfilment of messianic prophecies, but as an unusually dreary and repellent, but inevitable and on the whole tolerable piece of reality. In the socialist conception of things, planned economy had been firmly riveted to the abolition of inequality, of oppression and of nationalism. Reality was to show that it could come while all these things subsisted and increased; that socialism could be a thing which socialists would never be prepared to own.'

Borkenau goes on to comment on a scene much nearer home:

'The shock totally discouraged the labour movements of the world, more so than the war had done. Of all the socialist and labour parties, only those of Scandinavia and of New Zealand rose to the occasion. It is obvious at a

glance that the success of these four movements, where all others failed, was not fortuitous. They were all sober and apparently uninspired movements, in countries where every sort of dreamland was at a very strong discount. They were also countries with a strong trade-union organization. Last but not least, they were all small countries, not burdened with the major issues of international politics. Labour could only meet the new reality realistically where it had succeeded in keeping dreamland very far away from its gates. The lesson ought to be heeded.'*

It would be unfair to deny the Labour Party its confused but no doubt beautiful dreams. Presumably Borkenau is merely saying that New Zealand and Scandinavian socialists had their feet firmly planted on the ground. The dreams of New Zealand Labour rested rather too exclusively on material and perhaps even on vulgar things. The new Pacific Paradise was to contain widespread washing-machines and radios and plentiful beer. No one could deny that these could be part of the good life, though it was perhaps a pity that the masses didn't hunger for the arts. But at least, realists said, and with some justice, local dreams did have the merit that, being material, they were possible of realization. They did not require, as so many socialist changes did, too many changes in human nature.

Yet human nature has the last word. The more responsible the worker the more refrigerators are produced, and perhaps the cheaper they will be. The more responsible the human material, the happier the commonwealth. The wider and richer the variety of human activity in music or reading or hockey playing, the more satisfying the lives of the people. We have seen reason to doubt the stability of present compromises in social organization. Yet only human responsibility can maintain its present balance; and only an increased sense of responsibility in individuals can change it to a system of fairer rewards and fewer injustices. Democracy is in danger of disappearing beneath the assaults of extreme left or extreme right unless these elementary facts are admitted and acted upon.

It used to be said that political rights have not been appreciated because of their lack of economic content. Clearly there was a time (as there are still places) where bread was more valuable than votes. But New Zealand now

* *Socialism, National or International*, p. 95.

is neither the time nor the place for anyone—perhaps the workers least of all—to undervalue what politics can achieve. Yet it is true too often here, as in pre-war Britain, that 'a high proportion of those who now enjoy the practice normally regard the democratic state not as something which is their business and which they must keep going at personal sacrifice to themselves, but as an agency on which they have a claim for certain benefits and receipts and which imposes on them certain more or less irksome obligations and restrictions.' *

* E. H. Carr, *Conditions of Peace*, p. 34.

D. W. BALLANTYNE

AND THE GLORY

1

THE HELL with it, Larry thought, seeing the customer out of the corner of his eye. He went on stowing cigarettes on the shelf. It was twenty-eight minutes past five, he had to hurry and fill the shelf before half past so's he could meet the boys on time.

'Two packets of Golden Virginia, please.' The voice was hesitant, the sort you could pretend not to hear.

Larry picked up another carton of cigarettes. Quickly he ripped off the top, grabbed several packets, inserted them between others on the shelf.

The customer coughed.

Larry concentrated on the cigarettes, amused at the thought of the bird kicking his heels. The bastard should pull his finger out and buy his fags earlier in the day.

'I say, how about some service?' The voice was firm this time.

Hell, thought Larry. He turned to attend to the dope.

But Myers, the floorwalker, was already behind the counter handing over two packets of Golden Virginia.

'Thanks a lot, Mr Myers,' Larry said, turning back to the shelf.

'Just a moment, son. This is not my job. You're here to attend to the customers. There's two more waiting.' Myers spoke in a sharp whisper.

Annoyed at the way Myers spoke, especially at being called son, Larry attended to the customers.

When the narks had gone Myers, who had remained back of the counter watching, moved close. 'I saw you, Scott,' he said. 'You deliberately ignored that person. What's going on? This the way you always attend to your job?'

'I was hurrying to get the shelf filled, Mr Myers. I looked around when I heard him talk.'

'You heard him when he first came in. I was watching you, Scott.'

'I'm sorry, Mr Myers.'

'Watch it in future. You're here to give service.'

Myers walked away.

Greasy bastard, Larry thought, angrily jamming packets of cigarettes on the shelf.

2

Larry grabbed the beer, gulped half of it down straight off. He sighed and looked at the other three standing with him in a corner of the private bar. 'I needed that,' he said.

'Where's the fire?' asked Tom Duggan, another counter assistant.

'That damned Myers is on my tail again,' Larry frowned. 'Reckoned I wasn't looking after the customers. You got to give service, he says.'

'Well, were you?' Duggan asked.

'I was trying to get those cartons of fags on the shelves before half past,' Larry said. 'It was pretty late, I reckon no joker can expect service that late.'

'Customers come first, you know,' said Allen, who worked in the hardware department.

'Look, Myers is always getting onto me,' Larry said. 'I can't do anything, can't keep anybody waiting a second and he's behind the counter bawling me out. Hasn't he got anything else to do? What a soft bloody job some jokers have!'

'Forget your miseries,' Duggan said. 'Have another beer.'

Larry sulked. These jokers didn't understand the snitch Myers had on you, seemed to think it was right that Myers

should always be tormenting you.

Waiting till Duggan had taken the glasses to the bar to be filled, he said: 'You think they'd encourage a man to stay with them. The way things are these days it's easy to get another job. Wonder what they'd say if I gave my notice, got another job?'

'Forget it, Larry,' Allen said. 'Say, there was a sheila down my section today; boy, I bet a joker could make her on a cup of coffee.'

Offended at Allen's casual disregard of a serious matter, Larry frowned moodily into his beer, sipping it slowly so's he didn't finish ahead of the others and have to pay for the next round.

He glanced at Ryan, the tall welldressed clerk from the upstairs office. Ryan was a keen type, eager to get ahead, willing to talk of his own ambitions, not so willing to offer sympathy to others.

Larry waited till the others had discussed the girl, then he interrupted: 'Had your promotion yet, Tom?'

'Got a ten bob rise last week,' Duggan said.

'Funny that, you know,' Larry said. 'I been there about the same time as you, Tom, and I haven't had a rise yet. Wonder if Myers put my pot on.'

'It might come through this week,' Ryan said. 'Used to get sick of waiting myself. But it came through.'

'No, I bet Myers has been up to his dirty work,' Larry said. 'Don't like that sort of thing.'

'Well, I've found Myers a pretty good bloke myself,' Allen said.

'Doesn't trouble me,' Duggan said.

'Hey, Tom, coming to the races on Saturday?' Allen said. 'Taking the old man's car, and there'll be some grog.'

'Sure enough,' Duggan said. 'That include Kay?'

'That's what I mean. You and Kay and myself and Doris.'

'Do *you* good, Larry, to get out somewhere on a Saturday,' Duggan said.

'The mother-in-law's coming down on Saturday,' Larry said. 'Anyway, I have to take the kid for a walk. Pam reckons she has enough of him in the week, it's my turn on Saturdays.'

'Married life!' Duggan said.

'Won't see me getting hitched for a few years,' Allen said.

' Takes me all my time to keep myself on my pay.'

' Trouble with you, you got married too young, Larry,' said Duggan. ' Think of the fun you could be having.'

' I'm not complaining,' Larry said, watching Allen dig for the money for the next round.

' Just old Happy-go-lucky ! ' Duggan laughed.

Larry was sore. What business was it of theirs if he was married ? No outsiders could make you feel any different about your marriage than you already felt. And, when all the worries of married life were considered, didn't that still leave something to be said for it ? It was hard to believe this when you were down in the dumps and Pam was in one of her fretful moods and the kid was squawking, but it was not so hard other times when you got home and tea was ready and Pam was there to listen to you and sympathize.

He looked anxiously at the clock. It was five minutes to six. He hoped they took their beer easily so's he could get out of paying for his round.

3

Hands in pockets, shoulders hunched, he strode bitterly up the street from the pub. He'd wipe them, have nothing to do with the morons. They knew he was scratching along on a few miserable quid a week, had a wife and child to support, and it wouldn't have harmed them to wait till tomorrow night for his shout. They couldn't have enjoyed gulping down a beer right on the tick of six. He thought how each anxious moment nearer six o'clock had been a minute nearer his saving his last half-crown. Then, he might have known it, Duggan must look at the clock, sink his beer and demand that you shout.

He'd knock off going to the pub. Obviously he could not afford it; but, after standing behind a counter all day, it was good to relax a while before going home. There were not many other pleasures and, besides, he figured what he spent on beer week-nights would total no more than what most jokers spent on their Saturday bashes, and seeing he never drank on Saturdays it worked out even.

No, he would not knock off drinking; a man had to have some pleasure in life. But he'd knock off drinking with the fellows from the store. He had enjoyed their company in the past, but he'd noticed an unsympathetic attitude about

them recently. He'd find another pub and drink alone, and to hell with them.

He fingered the two pennies that remained from the half-crown and his anger increased; he knew nothing would make him change toward those jokers, they had shown they were not real friends. They were almost scornful when he attempted to explain how Myers had humiliated him, had not offered suggestions as he hoped they would. Bloody morons. Why bother with them? But for them he could have trammed all the way home; as it was he'd have to walk to the end of the first section, catch the tram there.

He walked close to the shop windows, the stealthy walk that accompanied dusk and humiliation. Keep the head down, the shoulders hunched; ignore the passing people, the cars, the trams.

No tram was in sight when he got to the end of the section, so he walked on. Anyway, he thought, he couldn't stand the shoving, the smell, the jolting, of a tram. He wanted to think of himself, consider the problems that were growing every day. At least, in times and moods like this the problems were greater; some days it was as though he had every right to be satisfied with life—a comfortable job, a wife, a child, the prospect of a State house, good health . . . what more did anybody want? What more had he ever wanted?

He felt through his pockets for a cigarette, found a butt and lit it. Why moan?

He walked on home.

4

Pam was waiting for him at the bottom of the stairs. She was crying. And, upstairs, the kid was bawling its lungs out.

'What you standing down here for? Can't you hear Dickie bawling?'

'Where have *you* been? Why didn't you come home?'

He ran up the stairs. She followed.

'This damned crying,' he called back at her.

He opened the door to the apartment, the sound of the child shrilling in his ears. The place was in darkness.

He cursed, flicked down the light switch. Nothing happened.

'What's up with the lights?' he asked.

'That's what's wrong,' she said. 'They came and cut

them off.' She wiped the sleeve of her smock over her face.

'What the hell they do that for?' he said.

'They said the bill wasn't paid,' she said. 'Larry, didn't you pay the bill? I told you this'd happen.'

'I went in this morning and paid it,' he said.

She moved across the room to the sofa. In the bedroom the kid was choking up long sobs.

He looked down at his wife. Her helplessness irritated him. He wanted to say something to her that would make her sit up and look as though she had some life in her, but suddenly the anger he felt toward the power board was more important than any irritation.

'God, I'll fix this,' he said. He stamped from the room. 'I'll show them!'

He rushed up the second flight of stairs to the meter. He was examining it when the landlady came from her room with two candles.

'Oh, Mr Scott, the power board men told me they were cutting off your power and I wondered if you'd like these candles.'

'They told *you* they were cutting it off, did they?'

'They said the bill hadn't been paid.'

'Fine thing! Telling other people *my* business! Matter of fact the bill was paid this morning. You know how much? The huge sum of seven shillings and sixpence!'

'It's awful,' the landlady said. 'Well, I'll give the candles to your wife.'

He called Thanks as he hurried downstairs.

He ran along the street to the corner dairy. 'Can I use the 'phone, Mrs Mills?' he asked, his hand already around the receiver. 'The power board cut off our power. The bill was paid but they went right ahead.'

'It's terrible what they do,' said Mrs Mills.

'For the huge sum of seven and sixpence,' he said as he dialled the power board number.

'Inquiries? Look, my name's Scott. 36 Patterson Street. My power's been cut off. What's that? The bill hasn't been paid! Look, the bloody bill was paid at ten o'clock this morning. I made a special trip from work just to pay the magnificent sum of seven shillings and sixpence. Now, I want those lights put on again smartly . . . What's that?'

The voice mumbled that it was there to answer inquiries; connecting power was not in its scope. The matter would

have to wait until the staff reported for work in the morning.

'Like bloody hell it will! What's the engineer's number? Those lights are going to be put on tonight.'

Fiercely he dialled the engineer's number. A woman answered. The engineer was out for the evening, she said.

'Listen to me,' he said. 'I'm a married man with a child. Name's Scott. I got home from work just now and what do I find? My lights cut off! My wife needs power to heat milk for the baby. And I want my tea. What? Hasn't the bill been paid! It was paid this morning. The magnificent sum of seven and sixpence. You tell him I got to have those lights on tonight.'

He let the woman say how sorry she was, then dialled the Mayor's number. The Mayor was out. He told the person who answered the 'phone what had happened, got the number of the power board chairman.

The power board chairman was home. 'Look, my power's been cut off. I want to know the reason why. Nothing to do with you! My God, this has got a lot to do with you. That power's going on tonight or you'll hear more about this. My bill was paid this morning and your fellows came up this afternoon and cut off the power. All for the sake of the huge sum of seven and sixpence. I *can't* wait till morning! I want that power on tonight!'

He listened to the chairman saying he'd get in touch with somebody, told him he certainly better get in touch with somebody or he'd tell his story to the Mayor tonight if it was the last thing he did. More would be heard of this, he told the chairman.

He stood back from the 'phone.

'Are they going to do something?' Mrs Mills asked.

'They better,' he said. 'I left enough noise. Something will happen all right.'

'What a terrible thing to do,' Mrs Mills said. 'You'd think they'd have some sense, wouldn't you?'

'All for seven and six,' he said. 'Be different if it was a tenner. Think I'll ring the engineer again.'

This time the engineer was home. 'You don't have to ring the chairman and the Mayor with your troubles,' he said.

'My oath I'll ring the Mayor,' Larry said. 'I'll ring the Prime Minister if those lights aren't put on tonight. I don't care how you get them on but they got to be on

tonight. And I'm thinking of suing you anyway for spreading lies that I haven't paid the bill.'

He walked cockily from the dairy, sure the board would make things jake. He thought with satisfaction how he'd told off the bureaucrats. Christ, the thing was ridiculous. Cutting off a family's power for the sake of seven and six! Well, he'd put the servile little bureaucrats in their place.

He returned to the apartment to wait for the power board men.

5

Larry sat on the sofa, looking at the glow of the electric light bulb. Pam was frying bacon and eggs, Dickie was squatting in a tub of water on the floor.

'I asked those jokers how much it'd cost the board to send them here tonight and they said about a quid each for them and a quid for the joker that drives the truck. That's about three quid it'll cost them for the sake of seven and six.'

'Yes, Larry,' Pam said.

'I certainly got some action,' he said. 'Nobody's going to push us around, honey.'

'Watch Dickie, will you, Larry?'

He leaned over the child, tried to grab the soap from him. 'Give Daddy the soap, Dickie. That's the man.'

'No, no, no.'

'That's no way to thank your old man for the trouble he's gone to tonight,' Larry said, rubbing the soap in Dickie's hair. 'Hold your head back. That's the boy.'

Made a man feel good knowing he had guts. He wasn't going to be trampled on by anyone. Nobody was going to push Larry Scott around.

What insignificant things his worries of earlier in the evening now were! The Myers affair had been very trivial; probably Myers had a good deal of justice on his side, was only doing his job. And there was nothing wrong with being married, as the boys knew; they'd only been kidding you, you shouldn't take them seriously. They were good sticks.

He looked up from the tub with a smile. Boy, wait till he told this to the jokers tomorrow! He'd hang on till they were in the pub, then he'd give them the whole story. Concentrate on the amount of the bill, then how you rang the engineer, the chairman and the Mayor, threatened to

ring the Prime Minister. Mention the idea of suing the board for spreading lies about you.

He wished it was tomorrow night so's he could be telling the story to the fellows in the pub.

'Better dry him now, Larry. He's been in there long enough.'

'Yes, love,' he said, lifting his son out of the water.

WILLIAM HART-SMITH

FOUR CANTERBURY POEMS

LYTTELTON

Now do you hear it, the surf
breaking on the beach
far below? Were we lying down there
in miniature

on the sand we should hear it no louder
than this. For the wind
hedge-hops these mountains and hills
going down low to skim

the water and cloud it
with its wings, but leaps
the sudden hazard of the land. The wind
is no stranger here.

PINES

Cones exploding sharply in the heat? . . .

and I thought it was the voice of branches
talking where they meet.

Strange flowers these,
that bloom woodenly in dark trees
and open their petals in audible jerks.

But that's evidently the way
a pine tree works.

HOLDING-PADDOCK

I FOLLOWED a barbed-wire fence
to be cornered at last in a small
paddock sharpened to a point.

I walked out of it again, and round it
and left it behind, a crude arrangement of fence
tucked in a pine-dark corner of the world

otherwise fenceless and immense.
A very small holding-paddock,
its gate crooked on a loop hinge, open wide,

and nothing but dry dung,
cracked earth,
and thistles inside.

AUTUMN, PORT HILLS

SEEDS, butterflies, flying leaves,
and the pine-break, a wailing-wall
against which the wind grieves.

And the sea sighing in the same way
as the pines, with the same voice.
And the sky flecked white as the bay.

It has been snowing thistledown
too, all afternoon. Snow in late summer.
And willow leaves turned yellow-brown

flutter in showers from the trees
when the wind shakes them,
and fly like Red Fritillaries.

And these and many more delights
are intermingled in the strangest way:
thistledown floats by like Cabbage-whites.

I think it possible that mother
nature dreams in favourite images.
Thus one thing likes to represent another.

RUTH FRANCE

THE ISLAND

The island belonged to my father—
That is, as much as it belonged to anybody.
It was of no use to him, being too small
For sheep or any other way of making money
And so I would use it—this wasn't forbidden
Since the island was in a deep bay
Somewhat sheltered, and easily reached in a dinghy.

At the summit—it was steep—were firs;
Rock-steep shore and trees being tongued a panoply
Of sound encumbered every movement,
Voicing what is; an urgency that flooded in
From long air-oceans, lonely stars. Young,
I learned there was no escaping
Wind labouring the hills and the demands of being.

Turning the windward cheek to the flow,
The unquiet air-impulse bounding
The known sphere—all else is silence—
So I would feel what is, the living haste, and
knowing,
I would make course against wind current and
water.
One effort to stifle another, one fear
To hinder fear, to close the mind the accustomed
enemy.

Only sometimes early in the morning
Was infrequent peace—the heart could wonder
What is the core of the place is it here
In the breathless firs in the lidded ocean?
No sail would quicken on the water but the oar
Splintered. Resting, or drained perhaps,
Air-lifeless does it live the ultimate island?

Later—it wasn't strange—I remembered
How without wind the early morning trembled
Entering the last places of the island.

I knew by then how love is found, truth
Discovered; delicately at first and unaware
Then battering like birds; a wounded gull
Beats itself to death on a groper hook left baited.

The island belonged to my father
Or rather, it belonged to nobody.
It wasn't even real considered against
Men and Material, War and Atomic Energy.
Reality rejected too the hut I built, now ruined,
But then, so did the island. Its own core
Was a reality immune even from wind the eroding
stranger.

DENIS GLOVER

PORTRAIT AND SONG

LEO BENSEMANN'S OLAF

Behind his untamed hair
The sea sleeps like a cat.

The mad blue eye
Sweeps in disdainful stare
Over the mad flat land.

Half lout half dreamer,
Here's one who fought the waves
And thinking murder fun
Would burn a city, colonise a coast,
Urging his sullen oars
Beyond the rim of the world.

Yet lusts for trinkets, violently
After the maelstrom battle
Would wreck his fleet
For some dark foreign girl.

Calling the just unjust,
He's barbarously fair.

THEMES

What shall we sing? sings Harry.

Sing truthful men? Where shall we find
The man who cares to speak his mind:
Truth's out of uniform, sings Harry,
That's her offence
Where lunacy parades as commonsense.

Of lovers then? A sorry myth
To tickle tradesmen's palates with.
Production falls, wise men can prove,
When factory girls dream dreams of love.

Sing of our leaders? Like a pall
Proficiency descends on all
Pontific nobodies who make
Some high pronouncement every week.

Of poets then? How rarely they
Are more than summer shadow-play.
Like canvassers from door to door
The poets go, and gain no ear.

Sing of the fighters? Brave-of-Heart
Soon learns to play the coward's part,
And calls it, breaking solemn pacts,
Fair Compromise or Facing Facts.

Where all around us ancient ills
Devour like blackberry the hills
On every product of the time
Let fall a poisoned rain of rhyme,
sings Harry;
But praise St Francis feeding crumbs
Into the empty mouths of guns.

What shall we sing? sings Harry.

Sing all things sweet or harsh upon
These islands in the Pacific sun,
The mountains whitened endlessly
And the white horses of the winter sea,
sings Harry.

T. H. SCOTT

FROM EMIGRANT TO NATIVE*

II. TE WHENUA AND THE FUTURE

I know that time is always time
And place is always and only place
And what is actual is actual only for one time
And only for one place

1

THE LITTLE town stood on the bank of a river which ran out of the mountains and down a long valley to an inlet of the sea. The houses began just beyond the beach.

When darkness gathered in the pockets of the valley and settled down on the town, Foggarty and his mate hid on the hills overlooking valley, town and harbour. From there they watched their ship getting ready to sail with the tide. When it was too dark to see, they rolled up in their blankets for the night. In the morning they were wakened, not by the noises of a ship, but by the sounds of a countryside they did not know, birds and hidden water. Their resting place was quite still, and instead of a sharp breeze off the sea in their faces, a heavy smell of manuka hung in the moist air. They wondered for a moment, as men do, waking in unfamiliar surroundings. Then remembering, they looked into the harbour. Their ship had gone; even the sea beyond was bare.

They wandered down into the settlement, past the unpainted houses, the one-storey buildings. The town was growing, and they had been told that work was plentiful. They took a job with others building the new reservoir back in the hills, clearing the bush aside and digging in the yellow rocks and clay. Then Foggarty, who had been a farmer before he ran away to sea, became restless at the promising news that drifted in from other parts of the island. He wrote a letter home for the next ship, then left his mate

* The first part of this essay appeared in *Landfall* for December 1947.

left the little valley closed in by the mountains, and made his way north. A railway had been built up the western coastline of the island to the tip of a plain. Here the mountains drew slowly away from the coast, leaving swamp and tall forest between them and the sea. The line followed the rolling foothills, where the land was cleared and farms supplied the needs of the settlements. Foggarty went north to a point where the mountains turned suddenly inland. At this bend in the range was a growing town; the mills and farms spread around it on the plain and up the foothills overlooking the land that stretched away north. He worked on a farm above the town, from where by climbing a hill he could follow the course of the river wandering over the plain till it joined the sea. Here he discovered the ways of the living things that inhabited this new land, and how to exploit them. The farm pushed back to the fringe of the bush, and he learned how to make pasture where bush had once been. In the town he bought himself a shotgun to bring down the native pigeons which were so plentiful and, at certain times of the year, extraordinarily good eating.

By this time he had saved enough money to marry, and to look for a farm of his own. He took up a bush section still further north along the ranges, on a tributary of the main river that headed out across the plain. There in a small house standing amongst charred logs on a hillside, his children were born. As they grew they helped him clear the bush on the lower flats of the section, milk the growing herd of cows, and get their butter out to the railway.

Then Foggarty heard that fifty miles away on the flats towards the coast the blocks were being cut up into farms suitable for carrying big herds of cows. He went off to investigate, and returned to tell his family that he had bought a farm at a place called Te Whenua. The price was incredibly high; there would be a mortgage. It was semi-drained swamp. There was some doubt about the house too, but the family packed up their possessions and moved out of the hills, driving their cows. On neighbouring sections men shook their heads at Will Foggarty's madness. The family themselves, except Foggarty, shared these misgivings.

The country of which Te Whenua is a part had at first been taken up by two or three men. The boundary between two of the blocks had passed through Te Whenua, and

along the line of it one of the first roads was built. These men had taken up this semi-swamp between river and sand-hills for the sake of the flax and timber, and among the flax and nigger-heads as high as a man they had also run a few bullocks and some sheep. When the Foggartys arrived with their cows, more intensive farming had already begun here and there, and roading was under way.

They set about making the unfinished house liveable. One of the block owners had built it when the flax-mill was working, but after the flax cut out and the mill moved on, it had been used for camping in by an occasional shepherd or stockman who had locked their dogs in one room and slept in the other. The Foggartys further subdivided the house, papered the walls and painted the outside. It stood unsheltered in the swamp. They fenced it, planted a hedge right round, laid paths and established fruit trees.

They built sheds and outbuildings; first a cowshed, on the highest ground they could find. It was a revolutionary affair, the first of its kind thereabouts, a ' walk-through ' type suitable for a big herd. They built fences along the road-sides to keep bullocks from coming in from the hinter-land of the swamp and mixing with the cows. They sub-divided the farm into paddocks of a workable size where stock could be segregated for different purposes. They began further draining and stumping, and ploughed a paddock which might be sown down level enough to be cut for hay for the winter. They put down a pipe for water. They planted trees as they discovered the habits of wind and rain—pines and macrocarpas, and willows along the water's edge of a sluggish creek.

The people of Te Whenua solved some of their common problems by joint effort. They ran their own factory. There the milk was separated, and the butter they made was carted in waggons to the nearest railway siding. They helped one another also in the larger tasks of farming; Foggarty and his family traipsed round many farms in the course of a season's haymaking. They set up church, a school was opened, a hall was built. Roads were named, one called after one of the original block-holders, one after the long drain beside it that had made the land farmable, and another becoming Line So-and-So, after its designation on the survey map.

There were innumerable jobs in the district for those who

had no farms of their own. Some worked at the dairy factory, others were employed by families not big enough to milk their herds themselves. Others again built fences on the farms, stumped and ploughed with enormous teams on contract, cut flax in the remaining swamp, dug and deepened drains and formed roads. When they had got enough money together they married someone in the district and started off on a farm of their own.

After he had been at Te Whenua for some years, Foggarty, now getting on, made a trip to the Old Country. His family had grown up with this phrase in their ears, but those still at home about this time were more interested in starting off as farmers or farmers' wives on their own account somewhere in the district than in gallivanting or taking a holiday. They in turn on their farms—along with others like them—had children of their own. These are the children of Te Whenua already described, many of whom are themselves taking over their fathers' farms, or someone else's farm, or perhaps going off to the city at the bend of the ranges, or to other cities. Foggarty's children and grandchildren, and the children and grandchildren of other men like him, are the inhabitants of Te Whenua.

2

Lighting my pipe in the road this late afternoon
I see the sombre evening close round the houses,
the paddocks stretched in winter's green drab to
the hills

The people of Te Whenua know the lie of the country like the palm of their hand. They know the look of the mountains beyond on certain days. They know a certain belt of trees on the sandhills, or along the boundary fence, or a cutting where the cows come down and the tracks creep out into the paddock like tentacles, or rushes in a corner left undrained where you can always find a hare. They know the smell of hay, the feel and sound of the wind day in day out as they struggle with it on top of a stack or feeding out, the driving rain and the cattle tucked up before it, the hall near the sandhill, the church nearby in the trees, the post-office where the roads meet. But they do not know these things merely as a man might know a map. When they have a day in town or at the races, or go for a holiday, these are the things they never get out of their minds when

they think about life, or plan what they will do when they get home again. It is in these that the very meaning of life seems to be. When a man ploughs a paddock or goes and sees someone, or borrows a mower or milks early, he visualises doing such things in a world which he sees and understands in terms of them.

Were this point made about the lives of people in most parts of the world, perhaps it would only be a statement of the commonplace. But it is a description of some New Zealanders, a people who have occupied their country much less than a hundred years, and as such it has some significance. Foggarty's story, and the story of the settlement, which I have given here in brief, form a background which must be borne in mind when we think about Te Whenua today. And, as I have suggested before, there are many other places in New Zealand with a similar background.

New Zealanders have not always been so at home with the sights and sounds among which they grew up, that these could provide the very substance of mood, the material for imagination, and be a starting point for all understanding, including that of other places and other times, both past and future. But a stage seems now to have been reached when, in people settled in one place, the sense of life is identified with their surroundings; so much so that imagination deals with past and future from the point of view of a solid and convincing present. Time has become bound to place.

But Te Whenua has not always meant for its inhabitants what it means for those who live there today. For an environment seems not to have an immediate and obvious meaning for men, a 'given', never-changing significance for feeling, thought and action.

Though every people must eat, sleep, shelter from the weather, there is an infinite number of ways in which these things may be done. And the physical environment does not seem to decide which way except by setting certain limits. Had men from China, India or Peru peopled New Zealand a hundred years ago, we would see a different kind of life here now, but it would still be limited in the same way by the environment. The pioneering, the opening up of the land for agriculture, has not been the 'development of a country' in any objective sense, as we are apt to think of it, but merely the establishment of a particular way of

life in a new country at a certain time. The meaning of life for any people is of course in their particular way of life identified with a particular environment. But the contribution which that environment makes depends to no small extent on what has been put into it. The life which now seems to be lived so 'naturally' amongst the details of the countryside at Te Whenua, is only felt 'natural' because to begin with men like Foggarty lived there as exiles, far from home, in a land they made the best of, and, when they died, were buried far from home. They wandered over the countryside before they settled, feeling their way about in a strange land, learning its strengths and weaknesses, following their bent where they could. Foggarty had been a farmer. He became one again. He had minded the mangels at home as a boy, scaring off the sparrows with a gun. At Te Whenua he grew mangels also, when he found the soil suitable and wanted extra spring feed for the cows because the grass didn't come away soon enough. As the farmers of Te Whenua set up a factory instead of continuing to make butter by hand on each farm, so they solved other problems —as they went, and as their past experience had taught them. And in doing so they ordered the countryside in the only way they knew. They built bridges over the rivers and drains, made cuttings for the roads or formed them above the swamps. They levelled the paddocks, and introduced new grasses to the soil. All these alterations to the countryside which they found were designed to meet the needs of life as they saw it, as they visualised that it could be lived there, in these conditions, thousands of miles from their homes.

Thus they gave this land a certain human stamp, made it express not only a certain way of life, but made it mean life, as all human beings seem to do in their environment. The importance for later times of the first generation of settlers lies not so much in their having put up with all the things they suffered here, but that their eyes and minds, which had learned to see and feel and think elsewhere, were the first to look at our rivers, plains and mountains, and decide upon their possibilities for human living. And not only this. Thinking was doing—they went ahead and made a human environment out of a 'natural' one. We perhaps take too much for granted that the difficulties of these people lay chiefly in the fact of exile, in the loneliness, in the hardship. Maybe it lay rather in keeping alive and unimpaired

their perspective, their conviction of what was significant in life, their sense of direction and purpose, which had in the past been so much bound up with (and even dependent upon) a lived-in environment—a known countryside and a society that seemed to be part of it, where every detail of a man's surroundings, and of the habits of individuals and society, was not only a sign of a certain way of life, but reflected the meaning of life. Perhaps that was the true hardship, coming to a country where there was nothing of this, and having to create a human environment again, from the beginning. But as a result, for the Te Whenuans of today there is no such problem, and no such hardship. Perhaps this is one of the things we overlook in laying so much emphasis on the more commonly celebrated aspects of pioneer conditions, 'the conquest and the taming.' The Te Whenuans can now follow someone else's footsteps; for everything they do a lead exists in their environment. With this human background established, they are set free to make variations upon it. Further, they are not only free, but impelled to do so. For having learned to see and think here, they see things as their grandfathers could not, and will do things that would not have occurred to them. They have escaped from a certain limitation which those before them suffered. This is not merely the ordinary change brought about by time, generation by generation, in the normal course of events in society, but a very special change between crucial generations—those who came here, and those who were born here. When the Te Whenuans of today use their roads or cross their bridges, they have not the same thoughts about them as their grandfathers. They do not think of them as immediate necessities, and regard them with satisfaction as things long planned and at last achieved, they are merely taken for granted in the business of living. Children swim in the baths at the school sports, intent on doing well before their parents. It does not matter to them that to their fathers' minds as they watch come perhaps the arguments they heard *their* fathers have over the way those baths should be built. Planting trees north and south to break the westerlies, facing cow-sheds a little east of north, are no longer matters for decision or discovery, but self-evident commonplaces, for which neither demonstration nor proof is needed. So meanings of things change subtly. For Foggarty the mountains told him some-

thing about the weather. So they do his descendants, but for them the very idea of weather is intimately bound up with those mountains.

But at the same time, a limitation has been set on their lives also. It was one particular way of life that was established here. The Te Whenuans cannot now ever fully escape the outlook with which life in this country began, the direction set by those who first gave meaning to these surroundings and made them express a human purpose. Te Whenua has its factory, its names on the signs, its organizations, while its ideas about human relationships and the nature of man are established in the ownership of farm gear, in the way farm work is done, in the specialized production of dairy produce, in farmers' bodies and their relations with their government, and in many other ways. The point of view the first settlers brought with them, the way of life they had known in their original homes, lives on in what they did to make life possible in their adopted country. For them, imagination ended there. Once life was established, it could be varied to meet what imagination, starting from there, suggests. But the possible directions of change have been limited, in the sense that any later way of life which develops here must have in it something of what was first established.

3

However we may change and develop, it must then be not only within the limits set by the physical environment, but also within those set by the way of life originally established in it. But this need not be an important limitation, not as important as many of us seem to feel. It is our attitude to it which is most important—the attitude typified in our habit of searching for signs that we are different from other people, especially Europeans. We are reminded of the limitation because our origins are so obvious, so close, and because in so many things we still turn to Europe to find forms and models to express our thoughts and feelings and to solve our problems—indeed to tell us what our most important problems are. But to assume that this is the attitude of all New Zealanders is a serious mistake and may lead us to overlook something important which has taken place and which must have profound consequences for the future. For the Te Whenuans, as for many other people in

New Zealand, a local countryside has become the basis of life, and through the habits, thoughts and sensibilities associated with it, gives life its meaning and perspective. This meaning may have grown out of that given it by the first settlers, but the connection tends to be forgotten. So much so that the things those settlers themselves did as exiles are understood in the light of the life now lived. New Zealand surroundings, New Zealand people and their works—houses, farms, roads and bridges, are the background and the stimulus of our lives now. This is true not merely of painters, poets, and composers, but of people whose sensibilities, if less cultivated, are not less intense. Perhaps they see and feel their local environment more intensely just because they are less cultivated.

I believe therefore that it is not our origins in and continued connection with Europe that must now be looked to when we think about our future. Its power to decide what that future will be has been exercised through our origins. In an important sense that power died when Foggarty's children were born, and was buried when his grandchildren came. For our future growth, we must look now at what has so far been made of our country.

That we cannot be sure of the implications of this seems fairly certain. For the first men of Te Whenua, faced with an expanse of swamp, could not be aware of everything. They no doubt pictured what it must look like if they were to live there the kind of life they wanted. And they went straight to work, not realizing that the goal they had in mind was not one which had been thought out deliberately by a few individuals, but something which had emerged from centuries of common experience and changing purpose in another environment altogether. Nor would they worry too much about the probability that, in the end, a succession of other goals might be substituted for this.

And again, they could not know that social habits do not remain the same when only a part of the society to which those habits belong is transplanted. We see the results of this already; it shows itself in many ways. In his own country, for instance, Foggarty may never have owned land and made it the realm of his private decision. Nor may he have come intending to own land. But once here, in this nascent society, his sense of freedom and independence (which at home might have expressed itself quite differ-

ently) came out in this way. Nor would he, at home, have turned so readily to the government when he needed help. But here there seemed, early on, so much that needed doing that the whole community must help, be it in building a church, or (through the government) establishing roads or railways or schools, helping the unfortunate and needy, or ensuring that the right of every man to a just portion of this world's goods be recognized. Again, once rail and road were established, travel and communication were easy and cheap. The New Zealand habit of travel, of keeping contact with people in all parts of the country, of moving round from job to job, may be explained in part at least by the new freedom of movement growing up in Europe at the time New Zealand was colonized, as well as by the shape and size of the country and the smallness of the population. The specialization in our economy, which is not merely a reflection of our natural resources, might be similarly explained. Many differences between New Zealand and Great Britain, of which we are aware, must have come about in this way. There must be many more of which time alone will tell us.

If we do not know what the effect of these things will be. this much we do know—these differences, perhaps trivial in themselves, have been firmly established at Te Whenua and other places like it, and are being lived, with all their potentialities for the future, not as differences from another way of life, but as part of our own life. What, for instance, are the consequences of the minor fact that the practice of milking cows by machine was established easily and widely in New Zealand, but far less so in England, where cows had been milked for so long before milking machines were invented?

Te Whenua was the end of the road for the pioneers, it was their goal. Their first attitudes to the environment, the first things they did, the first decisions they made, were important to them intrinsically, as ground won in a battle where the end is clear. For many of their descendants they appear in a similar light. But others today feel that

> Not the conquest and the taming
> Can make this earth ours, and compel
> Here our acceptance,

that this is not yet our country, and that we are not yet natives of it, but men still conscious of their origins and

their surroundings in a way that disturbs them, and makes them dissatisfied as natives never could be. Another writer, expressing that sense, addressed his fellow countrymen as

> Ye barren hearts and bitter, steep'd in brine;
> Ye empty lives where nothing native grows
> In that bare world ye worship!

Some feel too that what has been done is impermanent, that we are still, in a sense, fly-by-nights. Because changes appeared before habits and attitudes became conscious, we are left with no standards whereby we may judge our feelings, our actions, or ourselves—as a man walks into a desert, loses touch with his starting place, yet has not reached any vantage point from which he could find out his position. He works meantime with hopelessly long and inadequate lines of communication.

Yet many do live their lives here as natives. The journey into the desert cannot be regarded as tentative. Life at Te Whenua is neither hesitant nor momentary; a Te Whenuan does not uproot himself and move on as easily as Foggarty and his family did in leaving their bush-section and settling there in the first place. Te Whenua is not the end, as for the pioneers, but the inspiration, the starting point of life. Further, it is a growing point. The ground won is not important in itself so much as in making possible subtle changes in the goal, in the very things done and felt in the lives of those who follow. The Te Whenuans, so close to the sea their forbears crossed, are aware of its presence only as incidental in the main business of life. It is something to be visited, but not something that makes of their land an island with narrow limits. Their place of abode is real and permanent, and the life in it.

One day perhaps we may express this life more clearly in outward and tangible form, and thus see ourselves in a way that means that we have all of us become native, and possibly are no longer conscious of the issue at all. But it is in these starting points that we should look for the influences that must make us native, and for the ingredients from which we shall be made. For

> Time present and time past
> Are both perhaps present in time future,
> And time future contained in time past.

Then, it may be, it is not our origins that will be seen as important, but the first establishment of a new way of life which is our own.

COMMENTARIES

JOHN COX

A TOWN PLANNING EXHIBITION

THE LARGE public attendance at the Architectural Centre's planning exhibition recently held in Wellington had a much greater significance than mere interest in the solution of a local problem. The primary object of the Centre's Summer School was to open the eyes of the architectural students from Wellington and Auckland who took part to the ugliness, the inconvenience and general inadequacy of our towns. The selection of the area centred around Te Aro Flat in Wellington as the subject for study was incidental to the main purpose of developing principles which should govern the layout of any town if it is to meet contemporary social, cultural and economic needs. The theme of the exhibition was the clear statement of these principles in relation to the replanning of Te Aro Flat, and the impact on visitors was not so much the detailed local implications of the plan as the persistent logic of the students' argument for a city in which people could really live a full life.

The layout of the exhibition was so designed that the visitor was picked up and made to share the students' experiences during their three months Summer School. He was first shown a large scale map of the area stretching from ceiling to floor, depicting by colour notation the confused mix-up of homes, factories, schools, shops and public buildings as they exist today. Then he was invited to look for himself at photographs of the conditions—at best drab, at worst sordid—under which people were found to be living and working. For most people in the area there were no open spaces for play or relaxation, no trees, nothing but a dull dreary succession of mean streets and ugly buildings

crowding their allotments and denying one another light, air and sunshine. And public monuments? One only. The war memorial carillon, symbol of victory, standing incongruously in the midst of unchallenged squalor and meanness.

So far, except for those who had the misfortune to live and work in the area, this was an appeal to the social conscience and the aesthetic sense. The students knew better than to leave it at that. Effective photographs showed the confusion of traffic, the shortage of parking space, the crowded footpaths, the dangers to the pedestrian, the crudeness of the public eating houses, the squalor of the pubs, the shortage of space for organized games, the almost complete absence of any provision for indoor recreation. The list is endless. Visitors were asked could this possibly be a 'capital' city? Was this the best we could do? Could we not organize things so that all through-traffic would be taken out of shopping streets into a ring road properly designed for the purpose? Could not at least some of the shopping streets be freed entirely of vehicular traffic, with bulk deliveries at the back of premises and adequate parking areas reached through short pedestrian arcades? Would it not be possible to provide a few pleasant open spaces for the tired shopper to rest and for the city worker to relax and have lunch? In the whole business area there were two minute grassed spits of land jutting into a sea of whirling traffic. The other three focal points were public lavatories.

The commercial exploitation of the harbour front was even more complete. From Kaiwarra in the north to Clyde Quay in the south, three miles of waterfront, not one square foot had been withheld for public reserve. The harbour, said to be one of the finest in the world, was not even visible from the city. Throughout the whole three miles it was blotted out by railway embankments, store sheds and monstrous buildings linked together by tall forbidding iron fences. By way of contrast the visitor was referred to the treatment of harbour fronts in other parts of the world where it was thought worth while to retain large areas for benevolent exploitation for the pleasure of the people and the adornment of the city.

After this uncompromising analysis of the shortcomings of the city, the students proceeded to take the visitor, stage by stage, through the development of the basic functional plan. The location of the existing main shopping area is

reasonable enough, they said, but we don't see the necessity for taking the trams through the shopping streets. They stop only at each end in any case. The people will get as good service if public transport is routed through streets at the back which are designated for the purpose. If parking areas are provided in the waste space behind the shops, with pedestrian arcades through to the shopping streets, all vehicles can approach from the traffic streets at the back and the shopping streets will be reserved for pedestrians only. The arrangement will be as convenient as it is now but it will present many added advantages. Car parks can be really adequate both in size and design. Lorries will unload at the back of buildings instead of across the footpath as they do now. Free of the noise and dangers of traffic, shopping will become a pleasure. Small gardens and seats and warm coloured paving will take the place of the mad traffic whirl. But most important of all, it will not now be necessary to widen the shopping streets, and the million or so that was to be spent on compensation can be put to a more useful purpose.

Nearly similar treatment converts Courtenay Place into a real entertainment plaza. Again the bus stops and spacious parking areas are at the back, and the theatres and cabarets are linked across the gay paved courts with covered ways. Rising between here and the harbour are the tall tourist hotels and service apartments. The immediate waterfront already owned by the City and Harbour Authorities is cleared of its old sheds, the Council yard and the destructor, and becomes a harbour promenade protected by low glassed pavilions from the north-wester. From here and from the tall hotels that overlook it, there is a wide uninterrupted view of the harbour. Here is space where people can move about in gracious surroundings, where the city worker can relax and eat his lunch. There are swimming baths and a restaurant with dance floor projected out over the harbour.

The students agreed with the visitor's unspoken comment that this is not what we have been used to. But isn't it what we need? And we can have it if we really want it. There is nothing new about it. It is as old as Venice. Look at these photographs of the towns that other countries build. The Swedes don't shut out their harbours. This is how the Swiss plan their lake fronts. These are new shopping centres in America with their pedestrian ways

and large car parks. This is Brazil. These gracious squares are in England. By comparison doesn't Wellington look like a last century frontier town? Can we live graciously in this kind of environment? Is it even convenient?

Somewhat shaken, the visitor was then led on to a consideration of the residential areas of Kelburn, Brooklyn, Wallace Street and Mt Victoria. Here are slopes lying gloriously to the sun and view. An inner residential district on a natural amphitheatre unique in New Zealand, perhaps with few equals in the world. But what have we done with it? Regardless of the contours, many of the roads run straight up hills too steep for vehicles and negotiable by the pedestrian only by ladder-like steps. Obedient to the surveyor's line each house on its narrow allotment blocks out sun and view from its neighbour. Here is the inevitable outcome of rugged individualism. The game of beggar my neighbour in the final analysis beggars the community, for all are neighbours.

But most of these houses that pathetically try to assert their individuality are not occupied as separate dwellings at all. They have long since been subdivided into poky flats or ' rooms with breakfast-tray '. The land has become too valuable to be used for single family houses. Any new buildings have been designed as blocks of flats. The old red-herring controversy of flats versus houses is therefore completely irrelevant. The only question is whether the present jammed-up one-storey and two-storey houses are to be replaced by similar buildings with practically no open space about them and still at wastefully low densities, or whether we shall build upwards, giving everyone the benefits of sun and view and at the same time providing acres of land between and around for playing areas, gardens and community buildings.

The students had a good deal to say about this. Compare, they said, the area occupied by the Dixon St block of flats with the total area of valuable land that is covered by an equivalent 120 household units in the hotch-potch of buildings around it. Can the community afford this wasteful use of land that is fully serviced and within walking distance of the city centre? By what theory of economics do we neglect the re-development of these central areas and pile up more and more capital expense for new services in the ever spreading suburbia. Even were there no shortage of

materials and labour, can it be other than national economic waste to develop new suburbs, often on first class agricultural land, and to provide new streets with all the necessary services, miles of new transport routes, shopping and community centres, when beautifully sited central areas are put to only a fraction of their potential use?

The answer to this question was implicit in the whole exhibition. The student argument had given form to the visitor's growing uneasiness about the inconvenience of the city and the economic waste involved in its planless haphazard growth. But it was the vision of what a New Zealand city could really look like that came as a revelation. The students had used no commercial tricks. There was no slickness. The groups of buildings made no public gestures. Yet they were distinguished. They were almost severe in their acceptance of their functional requirements, but how different from what the visitor had been used to. In an age of spurious architectural jazz here was a piece of good music. The visitor heard it through. He went away thinking. That was the real success of the exhibition.

A. W. STOCKWELL

THE AXE

No one could *read* this new verse play by Mr Allen Curnow without being strongly impressed by the difficulties of staging it successfully. Its whole conception calls for bold and imaginative handling, and the verse at its best requires sensitive interpretation and subtle delivery. To producer and actors alike, it is exacting.

With this in mind, it is the more gratifying to record how well *The Axe* has been presented by the Canterbury College Drama Society. The play was given in the Little Theatre at the College towards the end of April. Everyone who had heard the Society's reading of it last year was anticipating its eventual performance, and thanks to the skill of the producer, Mr John Pocock and his team, they have not been disappointed. Where else in New Zealand, other than in a College Drama Society, could the necessary enthusiasm

'The visitor . . . invited to look for himself at photographs of the conditions under which people were found to be living and working.'

At right. One of the explanatory screens. In this way the whole of the final Town Plan was developed in front of the visitor.

Photographs by Brian Brake

Arterial Ring Road and other main arteries—thick black lines.

R RESIDENTIAL AREAS: Selected for good view and ample sunlight. Greater density of population combined with wide open spaces. For single people, childless couples and grown-up families, flats are suitable. Terrace houses with small gardens for others.

S MAIN CITY SHOPPING CENTRE: No vehicular traffic between shop fronts, giving safety to pedestrians, while ample parking areas behind shops provide greater convenience for motor-shopping. Goods deliveries at rear of premises.

C CIVIC CENTRE: Town Hall, Library, auditorium, small theatre, etc. Space for public assemblies in open air.

E ENTERTAINMENT AREA: Traffic-free pedestrian courts in front of cinemas, cabarets, Opera House and small shops. Bus stops located close by.

D DOMESTIC OR SERVICE INDUSTRIES: Garages, laundries, building contractors, etc.

L LIGHT INDUSTRIES: Only those industries that do not create a nuisance are permitted in this central area.

G SPORTS GROUNDS AND PARKS.

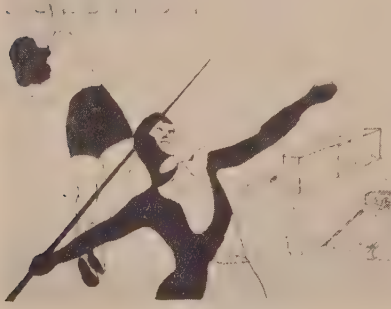
H HOTELS, hostels, service flats overlooking the waterfront.

W WATERFRONT: Esplanade with tepid baths, pavilions adjoining it, replace ragged dumps and out of place markets. A circular restaurant and cabaret projects from the pier.

Compare the area occupied by Dixon Street block of flats (above) with the total area of valuable land that is covered by an equivalent 120 single household units in the hotch-potch of buildings around it.

Vision of what a New Zealand city could really look like.

To house 12,000 people:
every person the advantages of the site and proximity to the city.



Tall residential units
ample sunlight
around flats
Shopping
within easy walking
traffic is kept to
service roads
easy access

Slopes lying gloriously to the sun—an inner residential district on a natural amphitheatre unique in New Zealand, perhaps with few equals in the world.

and enterprise be found to undertake a performance of this sort?

The Axe, as Mr Curnow informs us in a programme note, ' makes use of events on Mangaia in the Cook Islands, about the year 1824.' The theme of the play is the collapse of a native civilization under the impact of Christianity. The author suggests that his first impulse to write the play came from a series of lectures on anthropology and religion by Sir Peter Buck; but he adds that though the three main characters and the outline of events are historical, his primary aim was not history, but invention for the stage—' the tragic representation of a conflict ' where good and evil were to be found on both sides—

> the island is an island
> In time, not ocean.

On Mangaia, the dominant tribes have been newly converted to Christianity by a native missionary from Tahiti, called Davida. Led by him and their king Numangatini, they are engaged in a struggle partly religious and partly political, to subjugate and convert the representatives of the old order, the Ngativara. The remnants of this tribe are headed by their high priest Tereavai. A bloody battle results, the heathen are defeated; and Tereavai, deserted by his followers, blind and aged, as befits the protagonist of a defeated civilization, is speared to death by Numangatini. This provides the first of the two main climaxes of the play.

The Christians triumph, but we feel no great sympathy for them in their victory, partly since

> the defeated dead are happier
> Than the red-handed victor striding home
> Haunted by images of defeat and death,

but chiefly because the motives of the Christians have been far from pure.

Interwoven with the main conflict is a subplot which concerns a young native, Hema, whose Christianity has enabled him to slough off the old tribal awe of his king, making him jealous of Numangatini's authority. One gathers that Hema is chiefly impressed by the material advantages that his new religion has brought in its wake. This is symbolized by Hema's possession of an axe, ' one that came out of the sea with the new god '. Quite early in the play, this axe is stolen by a priest of the Ngativara, who subsequently

uses it to murder Hema's lover in the confusion which follows the death of Tereavai.

The second dramatic climax occurs in a scene which is the core of the play's meaning, since in it the full significance of the axe's symbolism is revealed concretely, in terms of individual human experience. Hema discovers the girl's corpse—and beside it, the fatal weapon. He renounces Christianity. Crazed by grief and disgust he determines on revenge; he imagines himself a god. Seizing the axe, he rushes out to find Numangatini, who dies after a fight offstage in the final scene. Hema enters and throws the axe down over the dead body. Davida tries unsuccessfully to exorcise the devil from Hema, now a demented blasphemer. Failing, he exhorts a follower to thrust him through, and Hema dies defiant.

By this time, a respectable holocaust has been achieved both on-stage and off, and the play ends with the prospect of Christian consolidation on the island. A final chorus states the fate of the dispossessed and defeated heathens.

After this summary (crude admittedly, but necessary since the play has not been published), I must now say that as a tragedy I think *The Axe* is a failure, though an interesting one. The play fails as a whole because the bulk of the verse is so weak. There is no genuine, substantial verbal equivalent for the reactions and emotions which actual performers must display on the stage. With the notable exception of the choruses, some of which contain poetry as fine as any Mr Curnow has written, most of the verse in *The Axe* is either strained, or undistinguished and dull.

One realizes, of course, that a verse play presents special difficulties. In writing *The Axe,* Mr Curnow must have been compelled to consider his audience far more than he has ever had to do in writing his other poetry. Previously, it has been for his readers to come up to his level, if they have wished to understand him. But here, he in his turn has had to make concessions. Fundamentally, his task has been the endeavour to achieve a heightening and concentration of language beyond that possible in prose, without sacrificing immediate intelligibility. He has had to observe the limitations of the spoken form. In doing so, however, despite occasional flashes, he has given up too much.

> Long ago, in the beginning of history,
> A whirlwind struck here out of a dazzling sea

And wrecked this tree, stripping off leaf and branch.
There was no shelter any more under the tree,
Under leaf or branch, in the knotted shadow,
No hiding-place any more for bird or man.

The rhythmical slackness and awkward phrasing of this extract are symptomatic of the general insecurity of the verse.

But there is a more crucial point than this. In a successful verse play, it is to be expected that the best poetry will occur in the most dramatic scenes, where of necessity the poet-dramatist displays the firmness of his grasp on the essentials of his theme. One climax in *The Axe* is reached when Hema discovers the dead body of his lover, and his revulsion from Christianity begins.

O what have they done to you? Why do you glare
at me
As if you hated me? How ugly you are.
The ground smells foul. O that was your own footprint,
Your ghost led me a terrible fool's chase.
That smell of blood—O see, I have caught you!
I have run my quarry down. *(He sees the axe)*
This too? All but my own hand. My pretty axe,
So they have returned you, only a little soiled
With use. *(He picks up the axe)*
How sharp, how bright, how heavy,
How gaily coloured. How devilish! How filthy!
There—I give you away. Your god's a liar.

The verse in this passage has disintegrated completely. Precisely where the advantages of poetry would have been most potent, they have been lost. For similar reasons, the symbolism of Hema's axe is unconvincing and incapable of sustaining the weight placed upon it. As a result the whole play seems hollow, both on the printed page and in the theatre.

In contrast with the other verse, the choruses are sensitive, supple and full of life. The closing one is an example.

First Voice:

Who are these walking on the water, treading
Easily the shallow and the narrow seas?

Second Voice:

It is the shadows of gods and men, receding
Like a tide larger than the moon's pulse.

First Voice: O these
In passing pluck up islands like lilies,
Shedding a gleam of steel on the yellow wave.
But who are these lost at sea, floating or drowning,
Bone picked white by the snapping gull, cast in an island cave?

Second Voice:
O these are the derelict, these had shelter once
Under the immortal tree whose leaves were clouds
And the ten spheres its fruit,
Till the axe fell at the root.

First Voice: Who wields the axe?

Second Voice: Time, and a hand unknown
Set living and dead adrift, by sea-winds blown.

There are two quite distinct strata of poetic intensity in the play, which do not cohere well, let alone interfuse—a characteristic which was thrown into sharp relief in the Canterbury College production, where the performances of Miss M. Miller and Mr Bernard Kearns as First and Second Voices of the Chorus were outstandingly good.

On the first night, in a short speech after the play was over, Mr Curnow said that at that performance he had really seen his play for the first time. Inevitably, he must have learnt much from the experience. One hopes that he found it sufficiently encouraging to be as eager to finish his second verse play as his audience would have him.

BEATRICE ASHTON

THEATRE IN WELLINGTON

Although New Zealand is still timidly short of its National Theatre and shoddily served by the professional companies on the road, there was nothing timid about Unity Theatre when it tackled *Lear* and nothing shoddy about the Repertory production, *Ghosts*.

Wellington in 1947 was rich in good theatre. 1948 has begun with an uneasy balance between a mediocre appeal to the box-office and a responsible approach to plays and

play-going. In January, when the life of the city had died, members of Unity Theatre trekked out after work to the Drama School at the Hutt, joining students of the theatre from other parts of the country. Enthusiasm was no substitute for hard work during ten intensive days of studying production, performance and décor with Ngaio Marsh, Maria Dronke and Sam Williams. What was done there for theatre craft, the actual practice in skilled movement, intelligent direction and stage design, might as well have happened on another planet for all its effect on the Repertory production of *My Sister Eileen* and the Thespians' *Friends and Relations.* Every species of rabbit-skin and musquash graced these graceless performances, and it must be assumed that any resemblance to good theatre was unintentional.

But *Lear* and *Ghosts,* like their audiences and like the Drama School, were mature in intention and somewhat unexpectedly a success at the box-office besides. I say unexpectedly because Unity Theatre has never allowed itself the luxury of catching up on its financial credit by the slightest deviation from its austere devotion to serious drama. And the Repertory Society, nicely supported by its two thousand members, has been conservatively unwilling to take risks. *Ghosts,* itself an accepted milestone in creative drama, was the first of a series of so-called experiments within the less risky confines of St Francis Hall. Furthermore the production rode high on the rising reputation of the happy combination of Maria Dronke and Sam Williams.

This happy combination of expert professionals was seen to greater advantage than in *Family Reunion* last spring. The set was a masterpiece of technique easily contriving three exits on the same side of the stage. But more, it embraced the entire house, with its unhappy prosperous veneer, and the monotonous dismal outdoors. It illumined the past, the anguish and the pretence, and increased the tension of the wretched boy's return from the eager warmth of Paris.

The entire cast moved in and out of that room with confidence and ease. The performance had cohesion, good tempo and technical exactness. What it lacked was heart. Ibsen himself is enough to stir our minds. Some of his ideas flitted through the dialogue, themselves ghosts that our society has long since laid. Others dated less. It is still unnerving to watch them command such devotion that they

warp and utterly destroy. Reared in the illusory shadow of an idealized father, Oswald returns to Norway and is so repelled by the barren respectability of his mother's house that he repeats his father's pattern of carousal and caress. Mrs Alving has to suffer this and more when the taint of his father's depravity undoes her prodigious make-believe. Here was unutterable human despair, which scarcely came to life.

Oswald was played most sensitively by Graeme Allwright. If anything he played on too high a key, investing even the first act with hysteria and a hint of his fate. With more petulance and less panic, with something at first of the joie de vivre he was bound to lose for ever, by holding back and mounting his hysteria from crisis to crisis, Oswald could have moved the audience beyond the point of shock to a real comprehension of his tragedy. Mrs Alving, alone in the cast, seemed to have some identity with the past. Had Oswald been allowed to stay his hand, that last dreadful scene with her would have been intolerably moving.

Regina floated through the performance looking as splendid as Oswald believed her, walking as well as he felt she did, 'so firmly, so confidently.' Pastor Manders and Jacob Engstrand slipped out of characterization to the verge of caricature. Manders, that Calvinist, pottered ingratiatingly until his guile was lost in his innocence. Engstrand the hypocritical old malevolent became a likeable schemer, spreading good will and light relief. It was needed badly enough, but upstaging is upstaging.

If *Ghosts* then was a somewhat passionless piece, *Lear,* from amateurs and an inexperienced producer, was magnificent effrontery. It too had technical exactness, with never a hitch in its complicated lighting nor an interruption in its continuous flow. The deceptive simplicity of George Eiby's set, with its variety of levels and sense of space, divided the players rather cruelly into those who moved freely across a stage, and those who still felt an uneven pavement underfoot. Howard Wadman's conglomeration of costumes was less successful than his skilful handling of the cyclorama, which lent new proportions to the set.

Dick Campion produced *Lear* with a sensitive eye if sometimes only in one dimension, as if it were a tableau. What was so remarkable about his production was that it did shed new light on a play that is rarely performed. If *Lear* him-

self, played with intelligence and power by John McCreary, lacked kingly grace in the first act, and Cordelia seemed less bravely true than she might have been, there were later moments when Lear felt the serpent's tooth at the arrogant hands of Goneril and Regan. From then on the performance gained momentum and had real emotional force against the violence of the storm.

Bruce Mason's incidental music was lost in the rustle of the audience, but the songs of the Fool had a tender melancholy. The crowds moved with precision, the duels had speed, the battle raged off-stage with gusto and the players had warmth. What was absent from *Ghosts,* intensity and enthusiasm, was never lost from *Lear.*

REVIEWS

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. A SEQUENCE OF POEMS. William Hart-Smith. *The Caxton Press.* 6/-.

THIS first volume of The Caxton Poets—a beautiful little book at a bargain-basement price—makes so immediate an appeal to the eye and to the pocket that its success should be instantaneous. Certainly if there is a public for poetry in these islands or beyond the encircling seas, Mr Glover is intent as any earlier navigator to seek it out. His latest venture, planned to present in more or less uniform format individual collections of new verse by living writers, all New Zealanders by birth or adoption, is bound to make publishing history in this country: it could make literary history as well. And whatever happens, No. 1 in the series is likely to be a collector's item one day. That it is in other ways something of a curiosity I shall attempt to show.

First, then, an unreserved tribute to The Caxton Press for conception and technical execution. The whole idea of the series is magnificently simple; but about as risky as Columbus' third voyage. For by now the great thrills of discovery are over; we know that there are poets, as well as whales, in the Antipodes; and though the expedition is well found and under an experienced commander, the

weather is as uncertain as patronage or public favour, and the natives across the water may be treacherous:

> Beware, Columbus, there's a trap
> that's not yet marked on any map!

Mr Hart-Smith's Admiral is resolute to shrug off the questioner behind his shoulder; a bold publisher must take risks. The names of poets to be represented later in the series are already well-known in this country, and guarantee a certain standard of achievement. Mr Hart-Smith's name is less familiar here, though no doubt it is better known across the Tasman. Still, a new name is a new name, and perhaps from a sales point of view, the gamble was worth it.

At a guess, I should say that *Christopher Columbus* has a better chance of popularity than some of its successors. The name suggests poetry; or, to that larger public Mr Glover is seeking, it suggests the kind of thing poetry should be about. (And that charming title-page and wrapper, with a graceful galleon riding upon frilly waves—irresistible!) The subject, it seems, has an old attraction for Mr Hart-Smith: his first book in Australia, a Jindyworobak publication of 1943, was entitled *Columbus Goes West;* and there were more poems on Columbus in his last book, *The Unceasing Ground.* What he gives us here is a sequence of forty-two short pieces, loosely strung on a thread of narrative that begins with the brothers Columbus in Lisbon, loops the ocean with the four great voyages, and ends with a glimpse of the old navigator, half-crazed and neglected, in his final retirement in Spain.

It is a straightforward scheme, a great subject modestly treated; and the story is so familiar that the reader has the double satisfaction of being able to follow it without difficulty (a rare enough achievement, he may think, in modern poetry) and of being able to anticipate with some accuracy what is coming next. That seaweed, yes; and the parrots; and those shocking diseases—here they all are, pat upon their cue. There are no rude words, though a few colloquialisms, such as 'pin-pointed' and 'a shot of spit'; above all, there is no tortured introspection. If it is all a bit like a rimed scenario, well, why not? The book won't do anybody any harm, and might with perfect safety be put in the hands of any fifth-form schoolchild.

All this may seem a little unfair to Mr Hart-Smith, who is after all a serious poet, and a poet of the dedicated kind

who obviously writes because he must. But I cannot help feeling that he writes too easily, and that his Columbus is too much the Columbus of the history books. I do not mean that a grand subject must always be treated in the grand manner: but if the architecture of epic or continuous narrative is wanting, and the dynamics of drama too, then almost all that is left for the poet (with such a theme as this) are the special virtues of the lyric: concentration and intensity. These qualities, in Mr Hart-Smith's sequence, I do not often find.

There are some poems that come off. The *Prologue*, for instance, is neat and effective writing; and such a piece as *Landfall* (2), though frankly old-fashioned, has a true rhetorical lift:

> No loud compelling angelus clangs here;
> only the silver bells of swinging stars;
> the forest answers; the bright chime
> of insects in their lairs. . . .
>
> And I must time my breathing with the waves;
> each lifts us gently now and shoreward runs
> to scrabble there with phosphorescent nails
> where travail ends and Paradise begins.

I like the onset and conception of the poem on the death of the Indian sent back by Columbus to Spain, the lines beginning

> He will be lonely in Heaven,
> this solitary Indian,
> servant of the young Prince Juan;
> baptised he was, and one of nine;
> but he died, and did not return . . .

and could wish that they ended there. And there are passages where Mr Hart-Smith achieves a plain style of description not unworthy of his material, though dependent (like good reporting) on the material for its effect:

> . . . sent men ashore,
> who reported finding two corpses
> advanced in decay, one
> having a red beard, the other
> with a necklace of Spanish cord.

This is good, because it is bare; and there are single pieces that succeed poetically in creating their own atmosphere, like *Departure* and *Disease*, and *The Land of Mangon*.

But, having illustrated Mr Hart-Smith at what I take to be his best, I am bound to draw attention to much in his volume that seems to me synthetic poetry, and much that is not poetry at all. One may forgive the mixture of chronicle and scenario with which he opens the second voyage:

> On the twenty-fifth day
> of September, the year
> fourteen-hundred and ninety-three,
> set sail again, from Cadiz,
>
> this time with a fine fleet,
> seventeen sail in all
> and no lack of volunteers,
> including knights, chevaliers,
>
> hidalgos of high rank, etc.

But what I find really objectionable is hack-writing of this kind:

> Madre de Dios, here is evidence!
>
> Turning, she kissed him full upon the lips,
> and they were one again,
> both crying tears . . .
>
> Santa Maria, look! . . . how far is home!
>
> I scream:
> 'Martin, come back! Come back! . . .'
>
> in the midst of which one of our parrots
> suddenly makes to shriek out
> a sound as of mortal agony.
>
> He hears the skylark sprinkle merrily
> a fistful of fairy coin upon the earth.

If Mr Hart-Smith can write as badly as this, then however well he may write in other places he is certainly a very unequal poet.

My trouble with Mr Hart-Smith, I suppose, is that I do not know where to have him. If he would write throughout in a straight Georgian style (which is the one, I think, in which he finds himself most at home) one would know approximately what sort of comment to make.

'Green ink,' he thought, as they walked in silence,
'is but green ink to me. My brother dips
his pen instead into the Western Sea.'

He said aloud,
'Brother, is it thus that when you dip
for gold you plunge your quill into the sun?'

This belongs to what might be called the 'Crock of Gold' school of writing, and some people like it. And most of us have still enough tolerance for the romantics to appreciate such lines as

Red gouts of weed, and skimming fish, to crack
the stupefying emptiness of sea,
night, and the unimpassioned gaze of stars . . .

Perhaps Roy Campbell, here, is a link with the moderns. For Mr Hart-Smith knows the moderns; with a glance at the Imagists in *The Beach,* he can continue to write like this:

we have grown weary of islands
and would like a continent.
We have been ardently wooed;
have been skilfully touched
up a long slope of preliminaries,
only to find there was no climax forthcoming.

This brings us at least to Eliot, and perhaps to Spender. But then, after a pastoral interlude (which includes the skylark sprinkling his fistful of fairy coin upon the earth), we are suddenly back to Browning:

I am not a courier, sirs;
though I have, on occasion,
acted in that capacity when pressed,
or my hand pressed with coin! . . .

'Courier! Courier! have you an answer
from the King, or from my son,

Don Diego, at Segovia?' Tell me,
who is that madman, that peculiar one?

Variety, in a sequence of this kind, may be a virtue: and so far as variety in form, rhythm and mood is concerned, Mr Hart-Smith manages his instrument with considerable skill. But such a variety of poetic styles (which have no organic relation to one another) is surely indefensible in any

considered literary work that does not belong to the type of *Rejected Addresses.*

If I have dwelt unduly upon what seem to me the faults of these poems, then a genuine concern for poetry must be my excuse. I have seen work by Mr Hart-Smith (some of the poems in his last book, for example, written while he was serving with the Australian forces) that had sincerity and warmth and, at times, a distinguishable personal idiom. I would not say that these things are entirely absent from his *Columbus:* but too much of this sequence is journey-work, and too much of it rings false. It would be kind to assume that these poems, in their present form, were hastily assembled and rushed to press. But in that case, what was Mr Glover about, to make this the first volume of his Caxton Poets?

James Bertram

THE GORSE BLOOMS PALE. Dan Davin. *Nicholson and Watson.* 8/6.

A NUMBER of the short stories in Dan Davin's collection *The Gorse Blooms Pale,* reveal an interesting development when compared with his earlier publications. Those familiar with the trend of significant creative writing in recent years probably read *Cliffs of Fall* and *For the Rest of our Lives* with some surprise. The extravagance of the style, the literariness, seem unreal, dated, at a time when the general direction is towards simplicity. And this is notwithstanding such current enthusiasms as apocalyptic, allegoric and, to use James Farrell's expression, 'literary-moral' writing, where there is a revival of elaboration, but in which, nevertheless, the language itself remains precise.

The gradual emergence of distinctive writing in this part of the world has had affinities with the American development. Hemingway's remark, 'All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called *Huckleberry Finn,* might with justification have been, 'All modern "colonial" literature. . . .' The problems that American writers had to overcome correspond, in broad outline, with those that later faced writers in this country. Until *Huckleberry Finn* appeared, the tenor of writing in America was

still English. Mark Twain revolted against literary traditions that were no longer adequate in the new world: his use of the vernacular and his forthright unpretentious prose brought him right into the American scene.

Inevitably, New Zealand's literary beginnings were burdened by inherited mannerisms. Our writers remained uneasy exiles clinging nostalgically to forms and sentiments that had no particular relation to the New Zealand scene. It needed Frank Sargeson to reveal, by contrast with his own expression, the shallow romanticism of our literature, its symbols loaded with second-hand emotion and perception.

Sargeson cut off literary dead wood (much of which is still preserved in our schools and universities), evolving a manner of writing that was clear and actual. He eliminated the distortion of literary language and raised our colloquialisms to the level of art; within self-imposed limits, he sought the closest affinity with our own particular reality. He gave the first confident indication of an indigenous literature.

In comparison, much of Mr Davin's writing has been rhetorical, artificial. In a panoramic scene in *For the Rest of our Lives,* for instance, German paratroopers are likened to dolls, ' prompted by a beastlike obedience and an animus narrowed to irrational but cunning intensity.' For those content with literary effect (which after all has a very long tradition) the passage probably justifies itself. Yet if recent trends have any significance, if one can hope to seek in the novel and the short story something of the truths of our time, this passage contributes little. In it the author's sensibility is distorted by the rhythms and patterns of language and by attitudes that have originated on other levels of experience.

In *The Gorse Blooms Pale,* however, Mr Davin has written stories that give a sharp undistorted image, stories that attempt to explore and illuminate that which is fundamental in our ever changing reality. The first eight, sketches of childhood in Southland, are acutely realized and clearly conveyed. Except for the description of the garden in *The Basket,* where Mr Davin's exuberance gets the better of him, the writing is restrained without being stripped of its vigour. The stories in the middle of the volume, with the exception of *A Happy New Year,* are the least successful. Most are good subjects spoilt by lack of control—a failing apparent in several of the war stories. In some (obviously early attempts) a delightful exuberance becomes rank with

words. The imagery is in the Gaelic oral tradition—blown half way round the world and gone to seed. In others, *In the Basement,* for instance, motivation is not really credible; the dim region of intention is inadequately handled. Mr Davin's conceptions are bold, but he not infrequently fails to realize them. *Jaundiced* illustrates his familiar trick of filling in with comment. But verbal abstractions, however fluent, are no substitute for the artist's vision: the sensibility of the whole being.

Throughout the book a variety of styles, varying with the subjects handled and the author's development, has been used. Mr Davin progresses from the overwritten sketches of student life to a generally firmer integration in the war stories, and finally turns back to childhood (it is fairly apparent that these are the most recent) to write with confidence, skill and understanding. *The General and the Nightingale* is a highly successful story, but it will probably date owing to the indiscriminate use of army abbreviations. *Liberation,* a taut colloquial sketch of the shuffling toughness of two New Zealand soldiers, could scarcely be bettered. *Under the Bridge* and *Danger's Flower* reveal how effective the larger suggestibility of semi-poetic language can be in the short story. In *The Apostate,* where a more literal but no less intense prose is used, an instant of perception is elevated to a significance extending beyond that of the central incidents.

A Happy New Year conveys strongly much of that which is flat and grey in the New Zealand character and mood. It is nearly all in this story: the limited emotional response of lives stultified by a philistine environment, the sly drinking with an ear cocked for a woman's reproving voice, the restlessness and tension that unexpectedly break into violence and brief awkward displays of emotion.

Sargeson has shown that the discarding of the superfluities of the European tradition does not necessarily entail the loss of the deeper values. Much writing that followed the American renaissance has been characterized by thinness, by surface realism and empty sensationalism. One gathers the impression from *The Gorse Blooms Pale* that Mr Davin will not be content with surface writing or a verbal facility. Clearly his potentialities are considerable. Above his failings, and he now appears to be aware of them, he brings to

his craft vitality and richness of experience, qualities that are rare in New Zealand writing.

John Reece Cole

CREATIVE PROBLEMS IN NEW ZEALAND. M. H. Holcroft. *The Caxton Press.* 2/6.

THIS pamphlet was originally a lecture given to the W.E.A. in Otago last year. Like ancient Gaul or modern Germany, it is divided into three parts; in which Mr Holcroft discusses the psychology of authorship in general, the special problems of New Zealand authors, and the immediate, topical question of the state endowment of literature.

All writing, Mr Holcroft suggests, reveals, first, a mystery, and, secondly, conflict in the writer's mind. Unfortunately, both these conclusions are irritatingly vague. By the mystery he seems to mean principally that, whenever an attempt is made to explain why So-and-so became a writer, it is always possible to find someone else, with precisely the same incentives, who did not write. From which Mr Holcroft concludes that the creative urge is an ultimate psychological fact. This may be true; and Mr Holcroft is certainly right in calling attention to the inadequacy of the Freudian (and, he might have added, the Marxist) explanation of literature. But as he expounds the thesis there is a hint of the ecstatic crooning about the sweet mysteries of life so dear to second-rate minds. Mr Holcroft's mind is far from being second-rate; and I wish he were not attracted to this kind of mystery-mongering. Aesthetics is a peculiarly difficult subject, but there is no need to suppose that it is ultimately unintelligible.

As for the conflict in the writer's mind, it is by no means clear whether Mr Holcroft means:—(a) the difficulty, common to all the arts, of controlling a medium; (b) the Freudian thesis that all imaginative writing is a 'projection' of the writer's own unconscious desires; or (c) the struggle against poverty. In the first part he seems to be thinking chiefly of (a) and (b); but later he uses the necessity for 'conflict' as an argument against state endowment. It should be obvious that an assured income does not remove either artistic or psychological conflicts. The essay, says Mr

Holcroft, 'is a medium somewhere between poetry and philosophy; there is room in it for imagination and hard thinking.' The touches of poetry should not be allowed to excuse looseness in the thought.

In the second part Mr Holcroft observes that New Zealand writers are trying to find their feet in an age when their colleagues overseas have been swept off theirs. 'The world is now so complex in organization, and so confused in its complexity, that no individual can reach a view of life which, in its wholeness, could satisfy the imagination. Poets and novelists are reflecting in their work the disorder of mind and spirit which is curiously attendant upon the orderliness of the physical sciences by which our lives are increasingly ruled.' I believe this to be true and important and admirably said; but Mr Holcroft goes on immediately to urge some kind of mystic communion with the soil which seems much more dubious. Our concern about soil erosion, he thinks, is merely a symptom of a deep-seated guilt about our relations with nature; it is only 'because we are a practical people' that we give it 'utilitarian sanctions'. Is it unfair to suggest that here Mr Holcroft's poetry has quite swamped his hard thinking?

When he comes to the State Literary Fund, Mr Holcroft's own feet are firmly on the ground, and this seems to me easily the best part of the essay. There is, as I have said, a weakness in his argument against giving writers too much money, and in general I believe much nonsense is talked about what Mr Holcroft calls the hardening of talent by adversity. We do not use the poverty of Mme Curie as an argument against research scholarships for scientists; and there is little danger that state grants would ever be generous or frequent enough to make of writers a privileged class entirely cut off from the rest of the community. But an occasional grant to a writer who had already proved capable of distinguished work would not do much to remove the New Zealand writer's sense of isolation; and Mr Holcroft is probably right in arguing that the main need is to increase the means of publication. He suggests that publishing should be subsidized when it is aesthetically but not commercially profitable. It has been objected that this would encourage writers to be political sycophants or at least to avoid controversial themes, which might be moral or religious as well as political. Mr Holcroft discusses this point

clearly and sensibly. 'Would the possibility of occasional rejections,' he asks, '—even if they are rejections to be lamented—destroy the value of the Literary Fund as an incentive to good writing?' Mr McCormick's *Letters and Art in New Zealand* is a valuable work of criticism even though it was commissioned by the Government; even a writer as unconventional as Mr Sargeson received a prize from State funds. He concludes that 'safe' books need not be worthless; and that the occasional writer who might be discriminated against would at least be no worse off than before. I think Mr Holcroft is right here. There is after all no reason to believe that the patronage of the State would be more deadening than that of the newspaper proprietor. The possible limitations of state endowment should not be used as an argument for opposing the scheme altogether, though of course it is a good reason for insisting that the fund should be administered by people who are not likely to be intimidated either by Mrs Grundy or a party caucus.

D. H. Monro

A CENTURY OF ART IN OTAGO. Edited by H. H. Tombs. *Harry H. Tombs Ltd.* 15/-.

IF ONE considers the limited demand for a survey of the arts of a single province of New Zealand, when the Dominion can barely support one publication a year on the arts of the whole country, it must be said that this book is a courageous venture on the part of its publisher and editor. By reason of his interest in the arts, Mr Tombs has built up almost the only collection of the blocks which make such a publication possible. He has given loyal service to the arts in New Zealand, pioneering a journal devoted to the arts against the difficulties of doubtful support.

Some of the seventy odd blocks in this book are good and some not so good, but we must recognize that we have not the craftsmen to do better work; and perhaps with the eclipse of fine art printing in Germany we have forgotten the standard to measure ours by. Of the sixty artists here two are represented by two works each and the rest by one only (excepting Frances Hodgkins, who is given nine: it is

quite misleading to star her in this way, since her early work alone has any relation to New Zealand). If we are to get any idea of an artist's work, this demands very careful selection. In most cases the work has been well chosen, but George O'Brien and R. N. Field, two of the more important painters, are badly represented. It was one of the disappointing features of the Centennial Exhibition of Art in Otago recently held at the Hocken Library that it failed to represent contemporary painters adequately.

With this exhibition fresh in memory, and the newly arranged collection at the Early Settlers' Museum seen to advantage for the first time, we can get some impression of the development of painting in Otago. It has not been possible before to see so clearly what now emerges.

I do not think it was primarily the remarkable quality of the Otago landscape which inspired and preoccupied painters here, as Mr Tombs's foreword claims. Landscape is certainly prominent in the work of the earlier artists, although the tradition in which they worked made it impossible for them to render the bush except as European woodland; this may be seen in the landscape by J. C. Hoyte which he reproduces. But the varied and powerful scenery of Otago does seem to have made a strong impression on them, and they tried to capture its vast panoramas even in small works. In their vision of the country we can find something familiar which was later lost. Most of them, like Buchanan, were surveyors and geologists and botanists, and their vision was less befogged than ours with aesthetic preoccupations. In the difficult technique of water colour they quickly solved their first problems, how to manage the foreground and render the strange vegetation. A good example of this is O'Brien's small *Landscape from Flagstaff* in the Hocken exhibition, in which the forms of tussock and Maori onion are represented simply but unmistakably and in such a way as to lead the eye into the picture. These painters left behind them a body of work which offers the foundation for a native school of painting; and it has yet to be properly evaluated.

This period came to an end with the decay of the early nineteenth century tradition, which coincided with the development of the colony and its first self-conscious casting about for a culture. A ' provincial drawing master ', the first of a long succession of art teachers from England, was

appointed in 1869, and the first art school was opened in 1870. The country had no tradition of its own and these teachers naturally tried to establish, in turn, the style in which each of them worked. So current English trends were reproduced here, if somewhat sketchily.

This tendency in painting was characteristic of a cultural development rooted in the mother country, which supplied the needs of our growing self-consciousness and dictated the standards of taste and critical appraisal, as it still does today. From the dozen reproductions chosen for this book to represent the Dunedin Art Gallery's collection one can deduce the level of informed public taste. They are not the best paintings in the gallery, but they are certainly among the most popular.

Since houses and public buildings were designed after English models, and parks and gardens planted with English trees and flowers, these teachers found in Otago much that was familiar to them. It is hardly surprising that they preferred to paint the familiar and neglect the unfamiliar. And what was familiar to them became the model they set their students, who thus learned to paint, and even to see, the imported rather than the native. The vision of the New Zealand artist was narrowed to the familiar barn, the familiar tree—relics of the homesickness of his teachers. His subject matter was decided by formulas which made him insensitive to a large part of the world that lay about him. Most students were content with this. Most are content today: there were, and are, few rebels.

If this view of the matter is true, a native school of painting must start where the earliest painters left off.

R. E. Kennedy

THE SHADOW OF A WAR. James Bertram. *Gollancz.* 18/-.

WHEN Vincent Sheean gave the title of *Personal History* to his account of experiences in China during the late twenties, he adopted a phrase which could be used to describe many a book written by contemporary travellers, social workers, and foreign correspondents. Such books are typical products of an age in which international relations have assumed an importance undreamed of by earlier generations; and,

perhaps because of this as well as for other reasons which have little bearing on the motives of authors, there are more than a few lovers of the art of letters who affect to despise them.

'Our forefathers, in their innocence,' observed Leonard Woolf, 'distinguished "literature" from "journalism", and occasionally wrote literature when they thought they were writing journalism; when we write journalism we call it reportage, and thus delude the ingenuous—writers as well as readers—into thinking it is literature.' A generalization as caustic as this should be heeded as a warning, not accepted as a truth, for, as far as I know, neither Edgar Snow nor Agnes Smedley,, neither Harrison Forman, nor Gunther Stein, nor yet again James Bertram is unaware of the topical and ephemeral nature of book journalism.

Writers like these have acted as our eyes and ears in Eastern Asia; but, because they have chosen to weave the dramatic story of oriental politics and social revolution around their personal adventures, scoops, and assignments, they rarely pretend to do more than present a sketchy, if vivid, account of the people they have met, the events they have witnessed, and the impressions they have gained. The most they can hope to do is to counteract the distortions of the headlines and cable news by their first-hand observations and experiences, to sow the seeds of an idea or an attitude, and provide a mental and emotional atmosphere in which human sympathy and understanding may thrive. They are messengers with tidings from far off lands, and we listen gratefully and with excitement to their accounts of dangerous journeys through unfamiliar surroundings where history is being made; but we wait for the significant statement, the important communication, the message.

It would be only a poor compliment, therefore, to such a writer as James Bertram to repeat the details of his personal history as related in *The Shadow of a War,* to pass from episode to episode with judicious remarks of qualified praise or blame, and to ignore the implications of a story which is rapidly becoming part of the texture of our own lives. For, as it proved, Mr Bertram's experiences in China and Japan were but an extension of the experiences of human beings anywhere in the world. The same social struggle now on one level now on another, the same human material now in one environment now in another, the same outbreaks

of bestiality and the same upthrusts of heroic endeavour, the same triumphs of the spirit and sufferings of the flesh are to be found in Asia as in Europe and America.

Everywhere are the people. Let philosophers and logicians decide, if they will, that 'the people' do not exist, that they are an abstraction to be avoided by all except emotional politicians and irresponsible agitators. Nevertheless, it is only when the people are to be found in the foreground of a man's mind that he may properly be regarded as a humanist and as one who may be capable of penetrating behind the façade of established institutions and official explanations to discover what life offers to the vast majority of men and women.

To James Bertram the timber-carriers of the Kweichow hills, bent double under their intolerable loads, the boy tin-miners of Mengtze, and the coal-miners of Mentoukou, were the symbols of a social cruelty which is far more terrible than the sadistic acts of individuals. Watching Japanese workers scrambling for cigarettes and oranges thrown by good-humoured G.I.s he could not feel that here was a typically Asiatic scene, for 'where millions live near the borderline of starvation, there will always be volunteers to cut capers for a thrown penny.' He was unable to accustom himself to the habitual, and refused to renounce fellowship with those who bear the mark of pain.

So it is that through *The Shadow of a War,* as through many another book dealing with the problems of Eastern Asia, there runs the theme of poverty and suffering—the poverty and suffering of the people; but ringing like a bell comes Mme Sun Yat-sen's clear and confident utterance with which it ends: 'It is here that the battle is still being fought —the battle that was not decided with the defeat of Japan. Here in China—and in India, too,—how much of the future will be made! And one thing is certain. However long it may take—the people will win.'

Yet everywhere in China and in Japan, everywhere in country after country throughout the world, there are those who wilfully blind themselves to the poverty, disease, and wretchedness described so truly by Rewi Alley as the real breeding grounds of wars, and think that by astute moves on the diplomatic chessboard they can exorcise the spectre of communism which one hundred years after Karl Marx used the words is not only haunting Europe but Asia as

well. 'Whom the gods destroy, they first make mad.' In places remote and also close at hand Mr Bertram discovered many who were and are prepared to regard Russia and not human misery as the enemy of mankind. There seem to be no limits to the evil that can be done, to the treason that can be committed against suffering humanity in the name of the defence of civilization against communism.

It matters little that the Kuomintang government in China has become infamous for its corruption and inefficiency as well as for its suppression of freedom of thought and the liberties of the people, and that the genuine efforts of humane and liberal men and women to alleviate the lot of Chinese peasants and workers are constantly frustrated. The Kuomintang must be supported by American money and American arms, because, forsooth, there are communists in China. The moves on the diplomatic chessboard demand that the communists should be destroyed even though, as many observers including Mr Bertram have shown, there is more democracy in communist-controlled China than anywhere else in that country,—but the communists must be destroyed, and, if necessary, the people with them.

It matters little that the Japanese people have for so many years been prisoners in their native land that it is only with difficulty that they could learn to breathe the air of freedom; Japan must be built up as a bulwark against communism; and the needs of the people must wait. Those Japanese liberals and communists who have spent a lifetime fighting against militarism and oppression must be cold-shouldered, and members of the former ruling clique must be courted and helped to positions of power, because any ally is a good ally in the war against communism. It matters little that in China and Japan agrarian revolution is the prerequisite of freedom; the communists support it, and revolution must be opposed by counter-revolution.

To the reader who has made a conscientious attempt to follow the shifts and changes of the political scene in Eastern Asia what emerges so vividly from Mr Bertram's book is the fact that human beings are always prone to mistake the shadow of a thing for its substance. Did the title he chose for this record of his experiences—*The Shadow of a War*—obscurely hint at our common human failing? Whether it did or not, it is certainly true that wherever Mr Bertram went he found the substance ignored and the shadow fol-

lowed by the very people whose task it should be to prepare the way to a new world.

Is it today, during this brief transit of uneasy peace, that the real war is being waged—the war against ignorance and disease, against human greed and human suffering? And are the men of goodwill becoming more and more confused because the spectre of communism is thrust across their path? Can the people of China and Japan be helped to achieve freedom from want and freedom from oppression by the present policies of America? Shall we ever learn the lesson ignored by all colonial powers that rulers who will not draw their strength and inspiration from the people are doomed?

Although he does not frame them in this way, these are the questions with which Mr Bertram is concerned, for he, too, has been both free man and prisoner. They are questions the importance of which transcends all personal histories, because they strike deep down to the very fundamentals of our social and political thinking, thrusting themselves in the path of all our humane endeavours and plans for social betterment. And it is particularly to the liberal, to the man of goodwill, that the pressure of their importunity has become so persistent, for, if he is not to deny the finest traditions of the human spirit, he must never allow whatever quarrel he may have with communism to force him into the ways of reaction where he gives his support to those who are cynically and callously bent on retaining at all costs their privileges and powers.

It is possible that future historians will discover in the confusions of the liberal mind the tragic undertone which can be heard through the cries of a people struggling for freedom. Seemingly incapable of finding a dynamic philosophy or a practical policy which could create a third force in a world where there is only right and left, unable to derive strength and purpose from the basic needs and aspirations of those who are enslaved by an obsolete system, the humanist falters and slowly drifts to the camp of reaction. Dragged from their context the lines of T. S. Eliot may be applied to his political hesitations:

Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion

And the act
Falls the Shadow.

A growing army of witnesses, however, of whom Mr Bertram is one, bear testimony to the fact that there are many who keep alive the faith that is in them, who overcome their frustrations and disappointments, and find work to do among the people and for the people. The future may not be of their making, but their acts and beliefs may influence it and soften its harsh outlines. The humanist may not be capable of creating a new world, but as long as he refuses to be a fellow-traveller with reaction, he can at least hope to perform something of the work that has been performed by such as Mme Sun Yat-sen and the scores of liberals and communists to whom Mr Bertram refers in his account of experiences in Eastern Asia.

'One thing is certain. However long it may take—the people will win.' Those who help to provide the mental and emotional atmosphere in which human sympathy and understanding may thrive, those who keep the interests of the people first and foremost,—only they will be allowed to join the noble company of men and women who by devoting themselves to the fundamental needs of suffering humanity, have earned the right to be remembered. In a world of shadows they have sought for the substance.

H. Winston Rhodes

CORRESPONDENCE

To the editor of LANDFALL

Dear Sir: I found Colin McCahon's recent religious paintings so moving and A. R. D. Fairburn's comments on them in the last issue of *Landfall* so urbanely blind that I must attempt some protest. After Mr Fairburn had observed that these pictures are lacking in all the normal attributes of good painting he went on to enquire whether they had 'a meaning *not* to be picked up by the naked eye . . . some profound religious revelation for us' and to answer 'I suspect not.' There seems to be some confusion beneath the jocularity of this enquiry. Religious painting, if it is

to be justified, must be visually pleasing in its own way. It cannot contain a revelation and not be good painting. I felt that McCahon had adopted the technique necessary to attain an end for which a smoother style would have been inappropriate. He shows the manifestation in the world of colour and form of that anguish and forgiveness which is to Christians the pattern of existence and found, for them, its supreme expression in Christ's ministry on earth.

The suffering depicted in these paintings is of a particularly shocking and helpless kind—it has the raw and inarticulate quality which is perhaps the native tone of tragedy in this country—and many of the human beings and other forms in the pictures seem distorted and pitiable. It appeared to me just and no more grotesque than it should be that the tremendous words of the gospels are inscribed on labels issuing from the mouths of these unhappy figures. What is important is that in the whole picture these details almost always become a necessary part of some design which, for me at least, was deeply satisfying and possessed of an extraordinary gladness.

Yours faithfully,

Hubert Witheford

Notes on Contributors

BEATRICE ASHTON. Born in Dunedin 1920. Spent 3½ years in the U.S.A. Runs a kindergarten in Wellington.

D. W. BALLANTYNE. Born in Auckland 1924. Stories by him have appeared in *New Zealand New Writing, Speaking for Ourselves, Meanjin,* and elsewhere, and his first published novel is expected from the Vanguard Press, New York, later this year.

JAMES BERTRAM. Born in Auckland 1910. N.Z. Rhodes Scholar, 1932. Senior lecturer in English, Victoria University College.

JOHN REECE COLE. Born in Palmerston North 1916, graduated at Auckland University College, and served with the air force. A collection of his short stories, which have been published in N.Z., Australia and U.S.A., is now in preparation. Works in the National Library Service, Wellington.

JOHN COX. Born in Taupiri 1902. Qualified in law and town planning. Practised law in Auckland till 1939. Now in charge of the Planning Division of the Ministry of Works, Wellington.

RUTH FRANCE. Educated in Christchurch, lived for some years in Australia, and in a yacht on Lyttelton harbour. Has published stories and verse and written radio talks.

DENIS GLOVER. Born under Sagittarius (Dunedin 1912). Founded The Caxton Press in 1935 and issued his Fiat to the poets, who thereupon burst out from all sides into eloquent modern discords. Poetical Pope or Vice-Gerent of the Muses for the South Pacific Social Security Paradise.

WILLIAM HART-SMITH. Born in England 1911 and came to N.Z. in 1924. Went to Australia in 1936, worked in broadcasting, and served with the A.I.F. Contributed to Australian periodicals and published three books of poems. Returned to N.Z. in 1946; recently appointed tutor-organizer in Adult Education for South Canterbury.

R. E. KENNEDY. Born in Dunedin 1909 and trained at the Dunedin School of Art. Stage designer and producer. Adult Education drama tutor in Otago.

D. H. MONRO. Born in Whangarei in 1911. A member of the editorial committee of *Phoenix.* Has been law clerk, reporter, librarian, labourer and teacher. Now a lecturer in Philosophy at Otago University.

BLACKWOOD PAUL. Born 1908. A member of the editorial committee of *Phoenix,* 1932. Bookseller in Hamilton since 1933.

H. WINSTON RHODES. Graduated at Melbourne University. Appointed lecturer in English at Canterbury University College in 1933. Was closely associated with *Tomorrow.* Writer, lecturer and broadcaster on literature and international affairs.

T. H. SCOTT. Born in Featherston 1918 and grew up on a farm. Trained as a teacher in Wellington, specializing in agriculture, and taught in country schools. Recently assistant lecturer in Rural Education at Lincoln College.

A. W. STOCKWELL. Born 1916. Lecturer in English at Canterbury University College.

NOTES

1

THE EXPANSION of Europe begins, with the First Crusade, before Europe is recognizable as we know it, and in a cause —the recovery of the holy places—which few Europeans would now regard with sympathy. The nation states had not yet crystallized out of the fusion of the barbarians with the heirs of Rome, in Northern Italy and the Low Countries the famous cities were only just rising, while half Spain was Moslem, England had but lately been reattached to the continent as a Norman province, and a mercantile principality ruled by Vikings on the lower Dnieper dimly foreshadowed the power of Russia—if indeed Russia properly belongs to Europe. The civilized world meant, at that time, not the West, but the great capitals of Islam—Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo, Cordova —and, above all, Orthodox Constantinople, from where the Roman Empire of the East still dazzled the eyes of men.

This movement, which seems in every way so remote yet forms an important constituent of our past, died away leaving little material trace except the superb Frankish fortresses of the Levant. The energies of men were to be employed at home, where they were most needed, and it was not until Europe had reached the height of its civilization that a second outward movement began with the voyages of the explorers. Expansion now carried men farther afield, into lands unknown to the ancient and mediaeval worlds, where some planted the old faith, some sought a new freedom of life and worship, and trade and the flag were introduced. In the Americas, Africa, the Pacific, European empires slowly took shape, and sooner or later became nations in their own right. This second expansion has not yet ceased, though it has changed in character. During the past century the West has littered the whole earth with its paraphernalia, but, except paraphernalia, it has had less and less to offer. The faith it still presented to the heathen it could no longer live by itself; its knowledge—in particular its scientific knowledge—had ceased before it was fully developed to serve any intelligible purpose or ideal of the good life. Its gifts were barren. It could destroy other ways of life, but its own was empty. It seemed to be drying up at the source.

It was late in the course of this second movement, at the beginning of its last phase (the time is significant), that New Zealand entered history. Although discovered in an earlier, Polynesian, expansion, which began about the same time as the Crusades, it had not before (so far as we know) been heard of beyond the Pacific. But now it was on the map of the world for good; it appeared there as an appanage of Britain and Europe, a settlement, a colony, a dominion, one of the nations of the British Commonwealth. In constant if distant touch with the homeland, it formed part of that New World in which some have seen an extension of Europe and some its heir and successor, but whose newness has as yet been only partly declared.

In the last number of *Landfall,* Mr T. H. Scott contended that Europe's power to decide the future of New Zealand (and, by implication, of any country of the New World) had been exercised through our origins and 'in an important sense' had died with the appearance of the first generation of native-born New Zealanders. The argument does not mean that Europe cannot still influence us profoundly; intellectually and spiritually (if in no other way) it will continue to do so for as long ahead as one cares to look; its past will illumine us no matter what its future may be. But its past and present both will come to us now as influences from without: it can only give what we as New Zealanders are able to receive.

In origin, New Zealand and the other British dominions, as well as the United States and the Latin American nations, were European settlements, outposts of Europe. But although European, they grew up on foreign soil, breathing a different air, and mixing, most of them, with non-European peoples. Their descendants do not belong to the same historical family as the European nations. They are the New World: they speak the old tongues, and employ the ideas and techniques which the whole world has learned from Europe, but their temperament and outlook have a quality of their own. It is too early for the non-European (or post-European) character of these states as a group to be plain. The British dominions are only in the stage of their prehistory, and the same may be said of the American nations in so far as the result of the vast miscegenation in process in nearly all of them is still unpredictable. More than a century ago Simon Bolivar looked forward to the birth of a

new race in Venezuela and Colombia, and Mr Fraser this year has spoken hopefully of a fusion of the two races in New Zealand; a similar fusion may come about, in time, even in South Africa; and both New Zealand and Australia have many immigrants yet to absorb. The countries of the New World are, in this respect, only just past a stage comparable to the wandering of peoples which preceded the emergence of mediaeval Europe. They are no more than half-formed: their present character, it may be, gives merely a hint of what they are to become.

In a sense, this does not matter to us; we live, after all, for our own time; but it will colour our ideas about our future, about our place in the historical series, and thus our whole consciousness.

2

That our history so far has been a pre-history may be seen more clearly in another field. The New Zealand system of parliamentary government was brought from England together with tools and seeds and ideas about the world and set up ready-made. But in England it took six hundred years of growth to reach its present form; it has been proved: it conforms to English needs: it is an expression in political terms of the English temperament and outlook—and these owe something to geography and climate. In New Zealand parliamentary government was a starting point. Already it has been modified or developed in a number of ways (which may give some indication of its future development), and it has the advantage of being extremely flexible. Further, democracy (meaning this particular variety of government by the people) has extended and is still extending in New Zealand from the political to the economic sphere: believing in liberty, we are unwilling to see the liberty of some lead directly or indirectly to the deprivation of others.

This attitude, which underlies much of our social legislation, seems to have been general almost from the beginning of New Zealand's history, and still persists. But our belief in liberty is, it appears, a qualified one: we allow surprising restraints to be put upon it, and we are not prepared to extend it to certain opinions and those who express them. For instance, we refuse to allow the introduction of conditions under which civilized persons could drink in public

without distaste; we permit the police to keep permanent dossiers of persons against whom no charge has ever been preferred, because their political views were once upon a time known to be displeasing to the government of the day—a practice open to serious abuse and unpleasantly reminiscent of the Gestapo and the Kempeitai; certain voluble enthusiasts would like to run all communists out of the country, for the greater glory of democracy; some of our returned servicemen want to keep other returned servicemen out of the R.S.A. for reasons which ignore the fact that all are returned servicemen; three years after the end of a war during which we shut up conscientious objectors in prison camps (thus making sure that they were quite useless, not only to themselves but to the community) we still deprive them of the franchise and forbid them to work in government departments—until last month we also forbade them to teach in state schools (though it seems that their disabilities may finally be allowed to lapse at the end of this year).

These curious details do not however alter the fact that there has been some development of parliamentary government in New Zealand. Our system is no longer identical with the English system; nor is the English system itself quite the same as it was a century ago when it provided a model for New Zealand. Lines of policy that would once have been decided in parliament, or by members of parliament, may now at times be decided by trades unions and chambers of commerce and farmers' organizations and the New Zealand Federation of Labour. But those decisions can still be challenged and the issues raised in parliament, which remains the final court of appeal in the land, the final scrutinizer of what is done in the people's name. And by its device of an official opposition, His Majesty's Opposition, the parliamentary system provides a safeguard at once symbolic and (within limits) real for minority groups; for a liberty not synonymous with those more repressive forms of equality which exact a deadening conformism; for disagreement, open controversy, and experiment—experiment in government, primarily, which if one party carries it too far can be checked by another, without endangering the stability of the state; but every kind of social and intellectual experiment also—and societies which cannot experiment either stagnate, or rot from within of boredom and inanition. The device is one which it would be hard to improve upon; and

in an age of centralized states, in a country where (as Leicester Webb observed in his *Government in New Zealand*) 'the strength of the state is a consequence of the weakness of social organization', it is one which we cannot too highly value. Indeed it may be thought one of the principal justifications of the system.

Although it has suffered various changes this system as a whole has never been subjected to very great strain. It has not endured such tests as the parliamentary system in England has had to undergo. It is still the English system transplanted and developed. We use it, as we use the country itself; we have not yet made either peculiarly own own. The truth is that its prestige, the prestige of the whole social-political system in New Zealand, rests very largely upon that of the system in Britain. There have been a few difficult periods in New Zealand's short history, the depressions of the eighties and of 1929-35, the war years 1942-43, but no one of them has tested our system of government radically. It may be that it does conform fairly closely to our needs. In any case it is unlikely to be questioned so long as the British system lasts and there is not another war or another and worse depression; but it is not a system that we have worked out for ourselves as an expression of our own needs —though it may become that by constant development. To say this is by no means to imply that a young country should make a fresh start after a while with a brand-new eclectic constitution of its own devising provided with all the latest scientific improvements: the American experiment should be sufficient warning against that. We need not distrust our system merely because we did not invent it; in a world where the fall of man made government at once necessary and necessarily imperfect (but always capable of improvement) it is a relatively good one, it fits well enough, and is more adaptable than most. But in the interests of our social well-being we should recognize that our institutions, like our society itself, are in a very early stage of development.

3

One would expect some uncertainty of mind amongst a young people which has achieved independence while its institutions are immature and before custom has had time to grow up, especially if it lacks the sense of unity and mean-

ing and direction which, for example, a common religion gives. We have put Europe behind us, but we cannot tell towards what future we are being borne, or what our way of life is to be. As Oliver Duff wrote in his perceptive essay *New Zealand Now*, 'The pioneers knew who they were and where they were going. Their grandchildren stand bewildered at the crossroads, not quite sure whether to advance or retire; whether they are strayed Europeans or white Polynesians; immigrants, travellers, or natives.' One of the ways in which this is betrayed is our peculiar reluctance to ask questions and our resentment towards those who do ask them—questions about our habits and opinions and assumptions, about our relations with one another, about society and its institutions. Anxious for reassurance on such matters, anxious above all to be thought good fellows and solid citizens who have nothing to hide in a plain common-sense society where everybody knows everybody else's business, we frown upon enquiry because we are apprehensive of the giddy prospects that—who knows?—it might open up. We want to be able to go on assuming that everything is known, sound, and beyond question, and to live accordingly.

To take an apparently trivial example, our immediate, indiscriminate use of Christian names is not only what it appears to be, an expression of equality and good fellowship (though it is that first): it is a means of keeping personal relations upon an easy surface level where no awkwardness can arise. The assumption behind this use of Christian names is, it seems, that to know the name—the personal as distinct from the family name—is to know the person, and that the relationship is therefore complete from the start and no further understanding, no discrimination, no forbearance, is required because there are no gulfs between man and man; which is comfortable doctrine, but far from adequate when extended as it commonly is to all personal relations. There may be in this, too, a survival of the belief of earlier societies that the knowledge of names confers power over the bearer of the name—power, in this case, to make him seem what we wish to think him; one may note the American habit—and power and its symbols are extremely important to Americans—of repeating firmly the name of the person to whom one is introduced, as if to add it to the tale of one's possessions. New Zealanders generally have a host of acquaintances—cobbers, pals, the boys, the

girls—but no friends; they pass a great deal of their time talking yet have no conversation. Thus we know very little about each other at more than a superficial level; we display our bodies freely, but keep our thoughts to ourselves. This may help to account for the distaste so widely felt for Frank Sargeson's stories: they give too much away—and betrayal by one's own people is even worse than criticism by the insolent (but ignorant) foreigner. The jealous conformity of New Zealand society and its refusal to countenance any deviation from the 'normal', betrays the same uncertainty. Its reactions have a dual nature, for they are also those of a frontier society closing its ranks against the enemy without —the unreconciled vastness of the natural surroundings.

Whatever this uncertainty implies, it cannot be repaired by silence. We can face it only by understanding our position, as persons in relation with other persons, as men in a particular setting of place and time, as an historical society; above all by making explicit our sense of the meaning of human experience. For it is finally an uncertainty about life itself: we do not know what significance to attach to it because we have lost any common religious faith and discovered no sure purpose as a society, nothing to live by. It is too soon, no doubt, for us to have done so. But a society which does not at some time interpret life as something more than day to day living, and attempt to make good that interpretation, will contribute nothing memorable to the experiment of civilization.

Every clue that may lead us towards self-discovery, self-possession, should be followed up: what are our real beliefs and hopes and fears? what kind of people are we? A reference by the Chaplain of the Student Christian Movement at Victoria College, reported not long ago, to the fear of war by which many young people are obsessed, tells us of one strong undercurrent of feeling which is not generally realized. It suggests, too, that our spiritual isolation is gradually being broken down, by pressure from without; and if we can share, even in that way, the experience of other peoples, we may be brought a little closer to them and be made a little more aware of ourselves. (Unhappily our isolation is being strengthened from within by our neglect of languages, for the University of New Zealand does not require students of history for either B.A. or M.A. or of English for B.A. to know any foreign language: how they can then make sense

of their own language and literature, let alone understand other nations, remains a mystery. But this is too large a subject to go into here.)

There may be other similar clues. But for the surest ones —and these are more than mere clues—we must go to literature. Hence the social utility (to mention no other aspect of the matter) of the stories, novels, autobiographies, essays, poetry, of our best writers. In their attempts to discern and express attitudes and purposes and intuitions which would otherwise lie buried we may hope to discover something of what we are. But the habit of communication has still to grow up among us: at present we use speech and writing less as a vehicle than as a substitute for thought, as a camouflage, to put other people off the scent, and to bemuse ourselves. Margaret's cry in *Howard's End,* 'Only connect!', might well have been addressed to us. Until the depression, we hardly wanted to connect, we saw no need to. But from that time on, circumstances forced us to try to understand both the world and ourselves with an urgency we had not felt before. The body of verse and stories and other writing which has slowly been accumulating since then is evidence of the attempt: it represents our first serious effort to establish communication with one another. Yet we have so little experience in common that communication is peculiarly difficult; as a people, we are still in the Garden, in the state of innocence: we have not yet tasted of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

MARGARET GARLAND

ARTA

Because I only went there once and not to stay
In that far place the sand against the sea
Is all immaculate and always in the sun:
And yellow corn there with the almond trees
Waits in the drowsy air towards the hills:
And up against the sky flutters before it falls
A wide white sail held always by my hand.
A youthful hand browned by the Spanish sun.

J. R. HERVEY

THE DANCER AND THE PROPHET

She whirls in a storm of praise
In this the sultry hour of her dominion,
Beauty, possessive as the sun,
And these the dazed minds
Caught in the loop of loveliness.

All words desert
the brain groping for speech,
For this starry thing burns away all utterance,
And loads the time with an intolerable treasure.

Who can make a song to follow
That glittering flight,
Limited by no leash,
Sobered by no presage,
Scattering laughters among the ascetic tombs?

To her, yesterday is not,
And tomorrow, even now walking,
Is an unheeded threat—
How shall she from the reckless music
Hear the studied approach of the stranger?

She is the darling of time,
The quivering priestess under the arch of days,
But she does not see
Time putting off his reassuring disguise,
And on the appointed night
The murderer at the last milestone.

Cool in her confident dream
she knows nothing of
One lurking beyond the lure of her effulgence,
The dark-browed exile

Who from his god-haunted rocks
Sees the dancer ringed by the wrathful fire—
Sees her like a sun-blessed wave
Die in a dishonour of scum.

For this is the man approved who from his tower
Of prescience sees the casual
Disaster fall from the dallying god
On the swaying adoration of the flesh.

And from a Voice more secret than the heart,
Knows of the bright-eyed bird
The least touch of whose feathers
Delivers the infection of death.

The dancer, along the blazing highway,
Could not discover the place
Where her heart was hidden—
Could not find
The self in its dreadful hermitage.

But he, having torn the corrupting raiment
And beneath the charming cerecloth
Having found himself
found also
The revealing solitude in which the rocks
Arranged themselves into an altar releasing
Perpetual waters.

And falling at last under the smile of death
He persevered towards the highest peak
Yet still lived in a word which ran
Like spring about the winter-famished pastures.

G. R. GILBERT

INCLUDE ME OUT

THERE I WAS, sitting in my little old ex-army hut. Just sitting on a pillow on a box turned sideways—one of the brewery's boxes it was—and I was leaning my forearms on a bigger box with legs nailed to it and covered by a blanket—ex-army again, liberated shall we say on my discharge—and I was looking out at the good old rain. Just watching it come down the beautiful way it does.

There I was, happy and relaxed, just staring at the rain, listening to its sounds. No radio making a noise, no refrigerator humming, no ironing-machine or electric-washer or heat-storage range, no packages of disinfectant or bottles of aspirin. No headaches, plenty of germs and all the electrons safe in their wires that passed two miles away.

So I sat in the hut and watched the rain, now and then writing a word or two on the paper before me. But only for the fun of it, mind you. Demolishing by words all my hatreds—a typical happy irresponsible neurotic filling pages with words of easy battle, and with absolutely no desire to be a mayor or a leading citizen or a manufacturer of adulterated foods for the good of the nation.

The rain fell with suspended insistence all over my two acres of earth, and on the roof of my hut. On the shed, and on the hide of my careless old cow as she daintily inserted her head through the wire fence.

So I added a few more words to the rest already on paper.

It was just then that the visitor arrived. For as I raised my head to rest my eyes on the falling rain, the doorway was darkened. In a flash the monstrous great car had stopped, silently and gently.

Ah—black luxurious monster, what do you do here? Would your perfect and soft-pressured tyres desecrate my garden? Your waterproof, plastic, pressed-in-one-piece engineering marvel of a body obscure my view of the falling rain?

I sat before my table and waited for it to go away. But that was never its purpose—out of it emerged a vision, a glory, a most exquisite creation.

And he waved a manicured hand to me; one sparkling

black narrow patent-leather shoe was pointed at me as he moved inside the door.

'Ah—how do you do,' he said. For the creation was male in appearance. Oh, glorious, shining from top to toe; the polished rosy cheeks glowing like ripe apples, the teeth gleaming with health and beauty. And, ah, the clothes. What clothes indeed—the contours, the cut, the fashion, the material, the sheen, the newness, the taste, the restraint.

So he held out one pink long-fingered hand to me and pressed mine in a firm manly grasp. I saw the handsome dress-ring, the diamond's subdued sparkling in the dull light, and beyond that the slight rise and fall of breath behind the impeccably fitting waistcoat.

'Ah—Mr—?'

'Cokes is the name. Joe Cokes—it goes with the hut, the land, the falling sky.'

'Ah—Mr Cokes. And here is my card.'

He smiled. The white teeth flashed, and he held out the card.

There it was all right. All the necessary, most restrainedly printed:

Albert Purecraft,
Representative—New World Industries Inc.

'Ah,' I said, holding the card between my fingers, unable to do much with it, being unused to such things. 'Ah—yes—.'

Finally I dropped it onto the table and asked him, kindly to shift his car a little so that I would again be able to watch the rain falling and my cow trying so hard to get at the turnips through the fence.

And of course he did so—such a considerate young man he seemed to be, and young as he was he moved that long shiny powerful car with expert assurance, and in no time he was standing beside me in the hut again with his traveller's bag beside him.

Looking back from the rain, that was falling so softly and with such charity, to this man, though, I saw the undue assurance in his eyes, the false spurious intent enthusiasm of the devout superficial believer. And the fineness of his attire impressed me unfavourably, while his cleanliness made me feel inferior. Such cleanliness, such wonderful antiseptic male smell, such healthy pinkness, such shining smooth-shaven cheeks. And the well fed look. Ah, that I could not abide.

'So you live all alone,' he said.

'That's right,' I said. 'Except for the cow of course.'

Then his enthusiasm blazed out.

'And you a returned soldier too. Why—nothing's too good for our boys. Just living alone here in this old hut without any furniture or any modern conveniences at all. I think it's just terrible.'

It was the voice of the deliverer. Then he beamed, and cooed at me.

'But that's just what I've come about. Just those things. We'll be able to fix you up with everything in no time at all. No cost of course. You men deserve everything and here you are with just a couple of old boxes. But just you wait till you see what we've got.'

Ah, the soft melting tones of his voice, the enthusiasm, the sympathetic note of horror. The tenderness with which he regarded me.

'Of course,' he said, as he searched in his case, 'it's all done by electrons. That's the negatively-charged particle you know. But it's wonderful. Everything happens at the closing of a switch. Absolutely no disagreeable odour, or any unpleasantness at all.'

'But I'm all right here,' I said. 'I like it here. It suits me.'

The young man placed an illustrated folder on the table and then fluttered his hands in confusion. His eyes showed amazement.

'Oh, *no,*' he said. 'That cannot be. How *can* you say that. Like it *here*—with this awful rain and all that mud and those turnips and that terrible old cow and just nothing to do at all.'

'That's right,' I said. 'That's just how I like it—all on my own with nothing to do.'

I looked at him hard giving him the hint like.

I must admit that he held his ground, although he jerked his head back a little and poked one finger between his collar and his neck.

Then he counter-attacked while looking at me cautiously.

'I say, old man, have you ever been psycho-analysed?'

'I have not,' I said. 'I allow my subconscious to fester in solitude.'

I walked over to a cupboard I had knocked up from a box that had once contained forty-eight tins of sausage, and took out a bottle of plonk.

'Ah,' he said as though I had explained something.

'You ought to consider it,' he said.

'Have a drink,' I said. 'This is the genuine article. Made on the premises from my own grapes.'

He produced a cigarette-case from an inside pocket—it was accompanied by just the faintest suggestion of some virile male perfume.

'Have one,' he offered. There they were—oval, with gold tips.

'No thanks,' I said. 'I prefer to roll my own.'

I did so and accepted a light from his stainless-steel flameless electric lighter.

I watched him take the first sip of plonk. I watched the tears come to his eyes, saw his throat dilate and his chest heave. His mouth opened and drew in air desperately, then, the spasm over, he smiled painfully.

'It's strong stuff,' he said.

'You bet it is,' I said. 'I can't keep it too long in the bottle or it eats the cork out.'

I tossed mine off and felt the fire light in my belly.

He drank manfully. I saw the flush come to his face and a moist film cloud his bright eye of health.

'It's bad, you know,' he said. 'You really ought to be psycho-analysed. Living here alone like this. You may be a schizophrenic. You should be properly adjusted. It's no good going on like this—an analyst would put you right in no time. Consider the debt you owe society—and yourself. We should *all* aim at being good citizens.'

'I hate society,' I said. 'I like being schizoid, and furthermore, I have a Jehovah complex.'

'Oh, dear,' he said, and moved a little on the box he was sitting on.

I poured out some more plonk.

'Here's to death and destruction,' I said.

He looked at me a little wildly but lifted his glass and drank.

'And now,' I said kindly, 'what have you to show me?'

Some of his enthusiasm returned. The light of salvation rekindled in his eyes.

'*There* you are,' he said. 'That's a sketch-map of part of the town. Wide roads, completely sealed, with four traffic lanes; dozens of schools, absolutely sanitary, well-ventilated, loud-speakers in every class-room, free milk and

fruit, and all the latest subjects taught by clinically chosen teachers.'

'And the *houses*. Ah—the darling wee *houses*—'

He waved a hand, his eyes closed blissfully, and I refilled his glass.

'—the houses are perfect. Everything opens and shuts—'

'Always ready for action and scientifically prepared,' I said, sinking half a glassful. 'Every room a bedroom, eh?'

'Oh, *no*,' he protested. He coloured delicately as he lifted his glass. '*Really*—nothing like that. But absolutely *modern*. Stainless steel; chromium plate; plastics; automatic heat regulation; air-conditioning; electronic garbage disposal; radio in each room; television plugged in; and a garden big enough for a helicopter to land in.'

'What the hell's the use of having a garden if helicopters are going to land in it,' I said—a little irritably I fear.

'Well—of course—actually, it's concreted over. But we call them gardens. Besides, all vegetables and fruit are available straight from quick-freeze to home-refrigerator at the lowest prices.'

'Ah,' I said.

'And *amusements*,' he continued. 'Never a dull moment. Always somewhere to go—skating-rinks, dance-halls, night-clubs, shooting-galleries and theatres. Ah—the *theatres*—they are *just* wonderful.' He choked in his magnificent enthusiasm, slapped a hand on the table and loosened off his collar.

'That friendly, intimate atmosphere,' he murmured reminiscently.

'Coloured lights,' I echoed.

'Pneumatic accommodating ushers.'

'Super sound systems.'

'Plush cushions.'

He swayed a little, pushed a hand through his hair and stared at me soulfully. 'And the *features*,' he murmured ecstatically.

We sang in unison—I marked tempo with the plonk bottle.

'Glamour.'

'Built-up blondes.'

'Certified sex in technicolour.'

'Romance.'

'He-men with artificial hair.'

'Breath-taking epics of contemporary heroism.'

'Tear-jerkers, soda-jerkers, jerking a specialty.'

'Human-interest heart-throbs for middle-aged matrons.'

'It's wonder-ful,' I shouted. 'By God I'm dry.'

He poured plonk with trembling hands, a hair-hank hung over a pink perspiring forehead.

He spilt a little, and with eyes hypnotized watched it burn a hole in the blanket.

'What's *that,*' I demanded, thumbing a building.

Proudly he spoke, sipped and continued.

'Our high-class hygienic all-star twenty-four-hour-service house of love. All tastes catered for.'

'My God, man,' I shouted, 'you have me excited. It's absolute comfort from arse-hole to breakfast-table. Labour-saving antiseptic streamlined comfort.'

He beat a hand on the table.

'We have 40,000 automobiles.'

Off we went again.

'200,000 vacuum-cleaners.'

'50,000 lovelies.'

'97 street-cars.'

'200 taxis.'

'Flowers in the park.'

'Love-in-a-mist.'

'Marie Stopes in the chain-stores.'

'Millions in the bank.'

'Happiness-clubs everywhere.'

'45 public urinals.'

'Trains twice a minute.'

'And the sweetest nicest little selection of suburban love-nests you ever saw outside heaven.'

'It's paradise,' I said.

'And, also, we have a haven-of-rest for the old folks, and an up-to-date white marble super-heat quick-action crematorium equipped with a penny-in-the-slot juke-box loaded with heart-soothing sacred melodies.'

'And secular pieces for non-believers,' he added.

'Ah,' I said. 'From birth to death on a rubber-wheeled trolley.'

'What's the *catch*?' I barked.

He stared, head on hands, loving sheep's-eyes alcoholically defocussed.

'No catch,' he said. 'We merely require you to work in

our up-to-the-minute every-comfort air-conditioned factory—there—' He pointed.

'What of it?' I asked suspiciously.

'Five hours a day, four days a week. Seven hundred a year, tax free with bonuses.'

'What do you call it?'

Proudly he squared shoulders and threw back black hair. 'Nucular Products Inc. Subsidiary of New World Industries.'

'What do you make, hey?'

'Well—actually—atomic bombs, mostly.'

'Twenty million tons of TNT,' I cried. 'By God, what couldn't you wipe clean with that. I love it. I adore it. No bigger than a man's hand, eh?'

'Well—yes. Of course—'

'Blood and guts for blocks around. Vacuum-cleaners, gas-turbines, skyscrapers, automobiles, refrigerators, faith, charity, hope and love, shattered, spattered into fragments, minced into microscopic particles and gone for good.'

'But we only intend them for self-defence.'

'It's not quite up my street,' I said. 'But I'm strictly a gambling man. You win and I'm yours.'

'Make it strip poker,' I said, reaching for my marked cards.

'Always on the level. That's me—Honest Joe. Shoot the shooter, flip the flipper and *away* we go.'

I cut, dealt, and watched his now-glaucous boiled-egg eyes focus on the pips.

He wrenched the ring from trembling finger and laid it down. I ran him up with a battered volume of Ben Jonson.

'That's me,' I said. 'Honest Ben—the old fox himself.'

He raised me with a tie-pin and then with his waistcoat of finest cloth.

I answered with a scratched recording of the first part of the slow movement of Beethoven's Seventh.

He saw me, but what good was it. I had a straight. I swept the winnings away.

'Drink up,' I shouted.

He did so. And dealt—but I rearranged things.

I won his suit-coat and the flameless cigarette-lighter.

I dealt. Then in the interests of fair-play I allowed him to win a fragmentary copy of Tennyson and an almost complete edition of Czerny's Exercises.

His eyes brightened moistly, his flushed face lit up.

'Ha,' he muttered. 'My luck's changing. I'll win you over yet.' He wiped his mouth with the damp back of one hand and thumbed the cards eagerly. His tie was loose, his collar hung open.

He dealt.

'Right,' I said, slapping down a copy of *Tom Jones* and tearing a print of Botticelli's Venus from the wall to put with it. He took off his pants and laid them beside a photo of his peroxided girl-friend and a season ticket to the swimming-baths.

I glanced at him—his hands shook as he held his cards, his now-noticeably false teeth chattered a little.

'Shall I close the door?' I asked sympathetically. 'It must be cold for you with no pants at all.'

So I shut the door and there we were, snug as bugs in a rug with that little old bottle of plonk sitting pretty beside us.

Meanwhile he had snapped his mouth shut, and had raised me with his collar, tie and solid-gold embossed cuff-links. I countered with *The Spanish Tragedy* and *The White Devil.*

'See you,' he gritted.

So I smacked 'em down—two pair, ace high.

He groaned, his hair fell forward, his eyes blinked slowly and painfully.

'Two of everything,' he muttered.

I dealt right smartly.

Ah—but he had courage that sub-atomic super-salesman. He took off his shirt and underpants and singlet. He sat and shivered.

I put up a bunch of my special grapes, two head of fresh cabbage and a pamphlet on compost-making.

He was nervous, his scalp twitched, one eye winked spasmodically. He glared limp-lipped at his hand.

'Throw in the car,' he muttered. It was desperate—a last violent fanatical stand. He hadn't a thing left to bet with—not even a foreskin.

'Rabelais,' I said. 'Plus Pascal, and Spinoza's *Ethics.*'

Despairingly he covered his eyes with a trembling hand. In dim alcoholic mists he oscillated gently on his seat.

'I'll see you,' he said faintly.

I laid out the cards. Only the soft rain on the roof made any sound. Then he peeped at them—a royal flush.

He broke down and sobbed, head resting anyhow on the blanket-covered box.

I gave him a few minutes, then I opened the door.

'Come, come, now,' I said, and patted his goose-fleshed shoulder, 'it could be worse—after all you still have your honour. But you'd better hop it now because I've got to milk the old cow.'

He looked at me beseechingly.

'And it's such nice *clean* work—helping to make bombs,' he whispered.

But I shook my head.

He swayed to his feet and after pausing at the doorway, gingerly stepped out into the rain.

I lent him an old coat full of decay and moth-holes.

'Think of all the air-conditioned, super-chilled, automatically-purified electronically-adjusted happiness you're headed for,' I said encouragingly as he hopped out and awkwardly beat it for the road.

Then I went out and pushed the car round the corner of the hut, thinking that it would make a nice little forcing-house for the tomatoes.

Walking back to the shed, I called to my cow who was still chasing turnips with fastidious energy.

ALAN MULGAN

TWO WORLDS: A CHAPTER OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY

My father's family and my mother's came to New Zealand in the seventies as part of a settlement from Ulster organized by George Vesey Stewart. The site for the settlement was Katikati, twenty miles on the Auckland side of Tauranga, in the Bay of Plenty. I was born there. Vesey Stewart was a man of vision and drive, an Edward Gibbon Wakefield on a small scale. He planned a transplanted society of gentry and farmers; the first would provide the capital and a congenial

social atmosphere, and the second would do the farming. Vesey was far-sighted enough, however, to picture the farmers as owners, and insisted that all of them should take out some capital. He inspected a good deal of New Zealand before he chose the Katikati block. He fell in love with the locality, and believed—somewhat erroneously as it turned out—that it would meet all the conditions of his plan. It was an attractive spot—spurs clothed with fern and tea-tree running down from bush hills to the Tauranga harbour, with river flats here and there, a land of streams in a good climate. So he collected his colonists and shipped them off. Indeed, and in this he was like Wakefield, he had begun to canvass before his land was allotted. The gentry brought with them books, plate and pictures; the farmers some knowledge of farming. There were two generals, a major, four captains, and three clergymen of the Anglican Church.*

The reality turned out to be very different from the dream. The land was not as good as Vesey had thought, and there was little or no market for what was grown. Katikati was suitable for neither sheep nor wheat. The settlement struck the depression of the eighties. However, the settlers managed to live fairly comfortably. Wants were few. Food was seldom short. Money came in from Ireland. Men found wages work of various kinds, and some enterprise was shown in starting new industries. This is a common condition in pioneering society. Socially, the gentry and the farmers kept their places, but settlers helped each other regardless of such distinctions, and there was no class feeling. Good comradeship prevailed, and people got a reasonable amount of fun out of life. Before long Waihi township grew up round the famous mine, and produce of various kinds that it needed could be obtained most easily from Katikati. This tided the settlement over the period till dairying developed. Today Katikati is one large dairy farm, dotted with plantations and gardens. It is as pleasant an example of successful development arising from planned emigration as one could wish to see.

In his recruiting, Vesey Stewart circularized the Orange Lodges of Ulster. An Orange Lodge was set up in Katikati, and the settlement's one hall was the Orange Hall. On

* See *An Ulster Plantation: the Story of the Katikati Settlement*, by A. J. Gray (A. H. and A. W. Reed).

'The Twelfth', Lodge members paraded in their regalia. Not that this made any difference to the standing of the two or three Catholic families. The Protestants were on perfectly good terms with them. But the distinctively Protestant nature of the settlement was an important factor in its relationship with the Old Counry. The settlers belonged to the ascendancy party in Ireland. England was their motherland as well as Ireland. When they spoke of 'Home', as they did habitually, it was Ireland-England they meant, with Scotland perhaps as an attachment. It took me a good many years to get to know and appreciate the other side of the Irish question.

It was this community that gave me the deepest impressions I received between childhood and the verge of manhood. As a small child I went to school in Katikati, and all my holidays from school in Auckland were spent there. It so happened that nearly all my companions were grown-ups, who had been born in Ireland. I was the one grandchild on the spot in a large family. At a most impressionable age I was a member of a remote society in process of finding itself. It was tied closely to the society from which it had sprung in Ireland, but by force of circumstances was rooting itself in a new world. Most of the older immigrants settled down fairly happily in their new home, but the thoughts of all often went to Ireland. They were transplanted Irishmen, just as in other parts of New Zealand immigrants were transplanted English or Scots. English mail day, once a month, was an event. Many of the families had someone at the Post Office to pick up letters and papers after the coach came in—letters with news and gossip from relatives and friends left behind, various reminders of life in a deep-founded and well-ordered society; letters with remittances, and letters without. In family circles there were scrambles for English periodicals—*Punch,* the *Graphic* and *Illustrated London News,* the *Boys' Own Paper* and the *Girls' Own Paper.*

For many years Katikati was isolated. To get out was a bit of an adventure. One party took twenty hours to go from Athenree to Tauranga, thirty-five miles. There was little money for travel. Our society was remote and self-contained. It was far away from Auckland, and much farther from Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin. Indeed, in spirit, Belfast and London were closer to the Katikati

settler than our southern cities. He had seen Belfast, and if he hadn't seen London he had a pretty clear idea of it, whereas New Zealand south of Auckland was only a shadowy picture. In those days London was much more vivid to me than any New Zealand town but Auckland. I had read of it in books and seen it in pictures. I think, too, that in our little community English politics loomed a good deal larger than New Zealand. At any rate I don't remember many discussions about New Zealand affairs. The immigrants brought their politics with them. To most, I fancy, Gladstone was the villain of the piece (for one thing he had disestablished the Irish Church), and Salisbury the saviour of his country and the Empire. When Britain and France came into sharp disagreement over Fashoda in the nineties, someone said: 'Thank God Salisbury's there!'

There was a good deal of reading. Some of the homes had excellent collections of books and there was a public library, also that institution with a typical Victorian title, a Mutual Improvement Association. Books were decorous.

> We asked no social questions—we pumped no hidden shame—
> We never talked obstetrics when the little stranger came.

We liked adventure and happy endings. A new novel by Stanley Weyman caused excitement. Mervyn Stewart, our neighbour at Athenree, had discovered another new writer, Rudyard Kipling. It was Kipling who wrote the lines I have just quoted, about the three-volume novel. The mood of those verses was the mood of the time—villainy well punished and virtue triumphantly rewarded.

> I left 'em all in couples a-kissin' on the decks,
> I left the lovers loving and the parents signing cheques.
> In endless English comfort by country-folk caressed,
> I left the old three-decker at the Islands of the Blest!

We did our serious reading; Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward,* for example. In Mervyn Stewart we had an enthusiastic single-taxer, who vainly tried to convert the electors. But I doubt if anyone had heard of Karl Marx.

I had a free run of books, but naturally at that age I preferred stories of adventure. We had Mayne Reed, Kingston, and Ballantyne. *Coral Island* was one of my earliest books. I read it several times. It is still a favourite with the young. In the *Boys' Own Paper* there were the public-

school stories of Talbot Baines Reed. I thought it must be the finest thing in the world to go to an English public school. A real man from a public school had a halo round him. Does anyone read *The Willoughby Captains* now? I re-read it a few years ago, and it seemed to wear pretty well.

The tendency of life in Katikati was to bind us to Britain and her established order—her politics, her navy and army, her Empire, her literature, her ways of thought. More or less, the rest of New Zealand was in the same state. New Zealand communities were bounded by narrow horizons. Take our little settlement in the Bay of Plenty, a small group of struggling farmers but recently come to this land. It would have seemed absurd to them to think of themselves as part of a nation. How could this new land, with its tiny population, make things that could compare at all with those of Britain? It was agreed that what was British was best. How could New Zealand form challenging ideas, write books, compose music? What had it to say worth saying? Romance was something that belonged to other countries. Rider Haggard, whose books we devoured—was there ever a thriller like *King Solomon's Mines*?—found it in Africa; Mayne Reed and Fenimore Cooper among the American Indians. Those countries were different. We hadn't any history worth writing about.

We didn't know that the deeds of American scouts and rangers had been parallelled in our own country only a few years before our settlement was founded. In a vague way we knew there had been Maori wars. Katikati settlers were actually occupying confiscated Maori land, and it is significant that I had no knowledge of this at the time, or for many years afterwards, till I discovered that fact during historical research. The local Maoris gave no trouble, and we saw little of them. We were taught no New Zealand history, at home or at school, and this was true of Auckland as well as Katikati. Another significant point is this. When I was in Tauranga in my teens, no one thought of taking me to see the old Mission House, 'The Elms', at one end of the town, or the site of the Gate Pa fight, a little way out of the town at the other end. 'The Elms' is unique in its combination of age, association, and careful preservation. It is now one of Tauranga's show places. Fifty years ago it was not regarded as history. We were too close to its story, and most of the older people had come from oversea. It is history today.

Nor were we instructed in the wild life of our country, the birds and the trees. True, the landscape made a deep and life-long impression on me. It helped to form my mind and ultimately coloured my writing. There were the blue hills behind the farms, the slopes to the tidal estuaries, the rivers and creeks, the scent of fern and tea-tree. There was the sense of space. From the top of Hikurangi, behind the Johnston homestead (Canon Johnston was my grandfather), you could see the sweep of the Bay of Plenty down towards the East Cape. In another direction, stretching away into the distance, was a tumble of bush-clad hills. There was the solemnity of the deep bush if you cared to find it. The Bay of Plenty was the south-eastern limit of the kauri. It was frontier country, with the appeal that a frontier makes to a boy. I have seen nothing in my life that comes so plainly to me as that old Katikati landscape in the full tide of summer. Even now it gives me a heartache to think of those days.

However, as I have said, there were limitations. We were not yet fully rooted in the soil. The homesteads had their shelter belts of exotic pines, and inside these were gardens and orchards of English flowers and trees. Roses bloomed in the gardens. Jasmine and dolichos covered verandahs. The sheltering pines seemed to cushion those pioneers from the full influence of their adopted country. They did their daily work—the men especially—in a New Zealand environment, but one can imagine them retreating to the Old Country atmosphere of their homes—English books and periodicals, English pictures, English letters, talk of England and Ireland. Yet the process of union was going on slowly. The Old Country was blending into the new. Years later I tried to put the Katikati settlement into verse, the imaginary golden weding of an immigrant couple. I wrote this: 'A new world touched with old, brave in the making, beautiful and bold.'

So life in Katikati gave me deep feelings, but little accurate knowledge. I knew little or no New Zealand history and could name few New Zealand trees or birds. In those long summer days a bird often sang. Its song had a lovely cadence, sweet but melancholy. Its music would drift through the long ecstasy of afternoon, and I came to associate this with the happiness of those summer holidays. I carried that memory to my life in the city, and later that same bird sang in my garden. But the point I want to emphasize is that no

one in Katikati told me the bird's name. I don't think anyone was interested. I did not find out until years after that it was the riro-riro, or grey warbler. In some verses about the riro-riro I described its song as ' half joy and half regret '. By then I had come to be a friend of that great authority on the Maori, James Cowan, and he told me that the Maori thought of the riro-riro in the same terms. That was a stage in my education as a New Zealander. Some years after that I was walking in the bush at one of Wellington's eastern bays with a refugee from Europe who was well versed in music. We listened to the riro-riro. ' Why,' said my foreign visitor, ' that bird is better than the nightingale.'

This was some forty years after my Katikati boyhood. Meanwhile the homestead had gone, and I had taken my children to see its site. In this country the descent of melancholy and decay upon country homes and their surroundings is swifter and more noticeable than in England. The choice of material makes such a difference. A brick or stone homestead is the exception in New Zealand, whereas in England it is the rule. A building in brick or stone may stand for years empty and uncared for without losing its solidity and dignity. If a wooden house is to last, let alone preserve its self-respect, it must be carefully tended. Build a house of heart kauri, keep it off the ground and paint it regularly, and its life will be astonishingly long. The historic house at Kerikeri, in the Bay of Islands, dates from 1819. But neglect a wooden house, and wind and weather work havoc on it. Failure to paint reduces it to a slattern. Uncared for, the verandah sags, the weather-boards rot. And in parts of New Zealand, where the climate is warm and the rainfall abundant, the garden becomes a ruin of unchecked growth, and native bracken and shrub quickly obliterate pasture.

There are a good many such places in New Zealand, and the melancholy that surrounds them is distinctive. In their crumbling timbers and riotously conquered gardens, there is a pathos hardly to be found in the more durable conditions of England. Often they are mute witnesses to failure of some sort, and isolation deepens the poignancy. In England the uninhabited and neglected is supported, as it were, by its neighbours, like a weak soldier between stronger comrades. You may fill in the New Zealand story as you like—the advance into virgin country, the high hopes and energy of youth, the felling of bush and clearing of scrub, the making

of a home. What happened? Perhaps this outpost garrison moved to another site, or farmed elsewhere, or retreated to town. Perhaps other adventurers took on the property and failed. At any rate there it stands, that decaying house, amid its shelter of funeral pines. The shed is nearly on the ground. A few apple and peach trees lift scaly branches above the high invading fern. A plane tree and a holly keep each other company, and perhaps find consolation in whispers about England. On the front of the verandah there are still some trailing roses. Advance into the farm, and growth of tea-tree and fern, or plants of the bush proper, bar the way. The air is warm with scents of New Zealand soil, an aromatic tang touched maybe with the sweet decay of the bush. These are the conquerors. The English rose, verbena, and jasmine, are doomed.

Even in drier, and in winter, colder areas, where there is little or no fern and scrub to take charge when the farmer's hand is withdrawn, there is a similar melancholy about a deserted homestead. To some minds indeed, the very barrenness of the landscape—tussock everywhere, unrelieved by trees, and the shoulders of bare hills making hard lines against a steely sky—may accentuate the sadness of frustration and decay.

> Over the meadows that blossom and wither,
> Rings but the note of a sea-bird's song;
> Only the sun and the rain come hither
> All year long.

The Johnston homestead, which, with its surroundings, meant so much to me, did not last very long. Built of kahikatea by men ignorant of the borer's special fondness for that timber, it began to crumble to dust, and had to be pulled down. But the setting remained—at any rate in my heart—and I returned there, eager to show it to my children. A new and smaller house stood among the pines, now larger and more sinister. In the garden there were a few struggling relics of the good old days. Back of the house, up the hill and down by the creek, was a wilderness. The present occupant, busy with his cows, had no time to check the invaders. Fern and scrub and bush had triumphed. The once open creek-bed, where we used to bathe and bask in the sun,

> A boy's will is the wind's will,
> And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts,

was now a jungle in which we lost our way. I wanted to show the children the old bathing place, but I couldn't find it.

Never before had I realized so fully the obliterating power of North Island nature. Yet there was something in those stalks of bracken as high as my head, the unconquerable tea-tree scrub, the tall straight rewa-rewa trees that had shot up here and there about the hills, something that was my own, an essential fruit of my own land. They were enemies, watchful ever for any relaxation of man's vigilance, but in a sense they were friends. They were my possessions, like the warm summer scents spread over the landscape, and the quiet solitude of those hills. The sun still shone, the larks still sang, as when I was a boy; the tea-tree still swung its delicate perfume through the air; the riro-riro still sang of joy and sadness; the peak standing sharp against the blue sky still looked down on farm-lands and tide crawling over hot sand into estuaries, the harbour bar on which breakers tumbled lazily, and beyond, clean of officious sail, the open sea.

I realized two other things. It was a changed land. The settlement was almost unbroken pasture, and such pasture as we had never known in the old days. Land that we had considered of little or no value, and left in scrub, was now smooth dairy farms. A new generation was reaping a richer harvest, and making its own associations. My own melancholy, now slightly sweet, now near to tears, was my own and no one else's. No one but myself could recapture my lost youth. No one else could people those hills and glens, those depths of pine groves and cool damp recesses of bush, with my own Mayne Reed and Kingston heroes, and my own dreams of fame and glory. My children, picnicking there with me by the stream, could not be expected to feel about the place as I did. The younger generation must make its own memories.

F. L. W. WOOD

THE PITFALLS OF PRACTICAL SOCIALISM

Surveyed through the eyes of Mr Blackwood Paul in the last number of *Landfall,* New Zealand bears a sombre and indeed a repellant aspect. Without haste or anger he surveys the broad field of our politics and finds it evil. The highest praise I have noted is a suggestion that a few leaders have a dim apprehension of the magnitude of one major problem. Blame, on the other hand, is distributed to all: to the Opposition, which is worse even than Labour; to leftists who fail in their duty to seek a definition of justice and to propel governments towards its realization; to cabinet ministers; and indeed to most spokesmen of the Labour movement. Too many Labour men are scapegoat-seekers in both domestic and foreign affairs, writes Mr Paul. They show cynicism, irresponsibility, and preoccupation with soft and easy doctrine. They accept with enthusiasm short cuts which avoid the discomforts of hard thinking or unselfish behaviour. Words and attitudes natural to a minority movement whose enemies controlled the state are faithfully echoed without serious effort to adapt them to the present compromise of state-controlled capitalism under a Labour government. And so the indictment grows to twenty-odd pages of castigation which spreads from Labour leadership to the community as a whole. A certain sympathy may indeed be detected for the rank and file of politically conscious workers, mystified by the unreconciled inconsistencies of their leaders' words and conduct, and for bourgeois intellectuals who find ' no inducement to leave the gangsters they were born among and join gangsters of scarcely distinguishable morals in the Labour Party '. Even so, sympathy seems limited to the notion that error may be venial. One feels that Mr Paul finds in New Zealand public life scarcely a hint of positive good—of warmth or generosity, of respect for principle, or genuinely held ideals.

Such full-blooded criticism is stimulating; and it provokes

numerous questions, only a few of which will be canvassed here. In the first place there is the inevitable problem: are the weaknesses here analyzed peculiar to New Zealand and therefore presumably due to local conditions, or are they shared with other countries whose faults can not be ascribed to Mr Fraser? With Australia, for instance, or Britain, or America, or even parts of Europe? If we share an almost world-wide trend the challenge is not less, but I think it takes a different form from that posed by Mr Paul. Further, though this discussion makes a useful contribution in the matter, I doubt whether Mr Paul is clear in mind as to responsibilities of politicians in such a community as ours—as to what may be fairly expected from them, for instance, in the light of the material and spiritual pressures to which public men are subject. The actual machinery of government is understood far better in its details (though even here much is guesswork) than in its total reality; and the problem of moral leadership still calls for rethinking in terms of modern political and economic life.

These are fundamental question which like Mr Paul I shall skirt around. Meantime I feel that certain specific points should be raised. In the first place, a great deal of his article turns on that elusive term 'socialism', which in the early stages is defined as 'an organization of society in which economic as well as political machinery is directly in the hands of the state'. Maybe this definition is not entirely satisfactory; and apart from theoretical defects Mr Paul suggests some practical criticisms later on when he insists that no social system should be accepted as an end in itself but only as a means towards 'the good life'. This in turn might challenge definition; but such questions apart, I feel that Mr Paul approaches his study with a fairly solid point of reference. Socialism in the present world would appear to be a 'good thing' embodying a concrete and attainable programme. When 'socialists' reach political power in a capitalist democracy, then, it is fair to expect something more prompt and drastic than has been achieved by Messrs Savage, Fraser and Nash. Failure to implement 'socialism' is therefore a betrayal of the idealism of the past, which is still awkwardly represented in the present by hackneyed phrases no longer sincerely accepted as bases for action.

Without questioning Mr Paul's detailed criticism, may it not be said that this thinking carries an echo of eighteenth

century intellectual optimism, a hint of the belief that men can work out a simple formula the application of which would immediately realize in this world the conditions of the good life? Does government amount to no more than (in the phrase of one hundred and fifty years ago) 'writing into the form of laws the truths established by philosophers'? If this be so, and the truth socialism, and if socialists have held power for thirteen years, the present state of New Zealand proves a gross dereliction of duty. 'Controlled capitalism' is by definition not good enough, even if it be believed that all government controls work with unmixed purity towards the protection of the public interest.

If this be even a partial element in Mr Paul's thinking, it should be remarked that the main protagonist of the theory that societies can be remodelled overnight by the surgeon's knife was Hitler, whose methods are now somewhat out of fashion. Even for those in possession of the perfect formula the human material on which they must work needs above all things time and patience in the moulding—even some experiment and willingness to admit mistakes. More than this. Mr Paul's article contains arguments which would go even further towards the rehabilitation of his victims. Through the mouth of Borkenau, for instance, he insists that the mechanics of his kind of socialism may be carried out without the removal of the human evils which are the bases of the case against capitalism. All depends on the spirit and the objective, the use made of the vast powers concentrated in the hands of a modern state. And as regards our own Labour movement he makes two shrewd observations. On the one hand Mr Savage in 1935 (and indeed Mr Fraser since 1940) headed a 'socialist' government with a 'non-socialist' electorate. And on the other hand, the Labour party had never made up its mind whether its objective was to mend or to end the existing system, and those who drove towards an immediate 'end' were plainly in a small minority in Parliament and country alike. What could a democratic 'socialist' government do in such circumstances? If one is to reason rigidly, I feel that the conclusion from this line of argument is that those who wanted socialism in the form of a complete reversal of the present system, and who were prepared to renounce improvements in living standards meantime, should have refused office in 1935 and have thereby kept the anti-Labour forces in power until their own

tougher view had prevailed both with the Labour party and with the electorate.

This conclusion seems to me foreign to New Zealand tradition and to Mr Paul's general attitude. I conclude therefore, that a certain reorientation is needed for his general critical material. The real complaint is perhaps not that the Labour government has failed to introduce the 'socialism' promised in its ultimate platform, or even that it has not moved fast enough in that direction. It is rather that the government has been too busy with the day to day work of governing, too busy perhaps in complicated calculation about the desire of pressure groups, to think in terms of ultimate objectives. There was a devastating remark the other day by a senior cabinet minister to the effect that he detested a given line of policy, but that public pressure was there and something had to be done about it. Whatever the rights of this particular issue, there could scarcely have been a more brutal denial of the cardinal principle that the leaders of a community have a duty to seek the truth and the public good at the cost, if necessary, of telling certain people that their wishes must be denied. Is it too idealistic to hope that in a country like New Zealand a firm lead based on principles sincerely held, irrespective of immediate party interest, is not only morally necessary to the community's health, but also a good ultimate road to public esteem? One would like to think that the Labour movement rose to power in New Zealand not only because it stood for working class interests but because it voiced certain human ideals of universal appeal. Leadership of this kind, expressed in terms which will carry conviction to generations jaded by the slogans of two world wars, is an outstanding need of present day politics. And so is the breath of free discussion and honest criticism. All who have studied New Zealand history have seen evidence of the vital part played by such discussion in the building up of liberal and labour policies; it has indeed been the lifeblood of radicalism, and is the essential condition of democratic participation in public life. Yet few would argue that Labour in power has made the encouragement of such criticism and suggestion an article of practical faith.

To conclude: much of Mr Paul's material derives from beyond my knowledge, but when all allowance has been made it shows a state of unhealth which goes beyond politics and is linked with a slackness in the community as a whole.

There is, he says, a lack of clarity and force and a loose selfishness which present a challenge to leadership fit for a statesman to take up. The price of leadership must be a willingness to face unpopularity and defeat in a good cause; and, I would add, a condition of success must be the intellectual labour involved in the pursuit of truth, together with the determination to defend it, at whatever personal cost, with the weapons of open and peaceful persuasion. This seems to me the formula for bridging the gaps denounced by Mr Paul. And is it too late in the world's history to recall that some of the most volcanic responses to political leadership have been aroused by those who spoke in terms of duty rather than of material advancement?

P. J. WILSON

A RENTED ROOM

WHEN HE KNOCKED at the door a very fat woman answered it. She was quite small but enormously fat, and her face was dead white.

'You've come to look at the room?' she said in a musical Lancashire voice, and when he nodded she opened a door just inside the hall and went in. He followed her. She shuffled across the bare floor in her slippers, wheezing and panting with the exertion, and sat down on the bed by the wall. 'Well,' she said, gasping for breath, 'does it suit? You supply your own linen.'

He looked around. There was a white chest of drawers and a low, marble-topped wash-stand, and a book-case on one wall. The window looked out onto the front verandah and the street. 'I'll have to have a table,' he said, 'and a chair.'

'Well,' she said, 'it's eighteen. Take it or leave it.'

'I'll have to think about it. I haven't got my own blankets and sheets.'

'Sheets don't cost much,' she said. 'And haven't you got a rug? I can give you a chair.'

He looked at the gas stove in the corner, while she eagerly

watched him take stock of the room. 'You put a shilling in the slot,' she said, 'and that's all there is to it. The laundry and conveniences are at the back. Do you want it?'

'I'll have to think about it,' he said.

'You'll have to be quick. There'll be more knocking at the door before night. It's cheap. They'll snap it up.'

He went down the road to a coffee shop and sat there drinking his coffee and smoking a cigarette, feeling strange in his civilian clothes. He had forgotten what it would be like looking for lodgings. The city seemed to have grown tremendously, but there was not a room to rent at the price he could afford to pay. He felt strange and lost in it. There seemed to be no room for him at all. Everybody looked hostile and suspicious so that he felt uncomfortable knocking at strange doors. He had forgotten it would be like that. And this house was in a filthy street, a real slum area. But it didn't look as if he'd get anything else, and at least the room was clean. He went into a phone box and rang Minnie. 'Can you lend me a blanket and a couple of pots until I get my own?' he said. 'I think I've got a place.'

'Of course Dan,' she said. 'That's good. Grab it before it goes. You won't get another in a week of looking.'

He went back to the evil-smelling street, down between the rows of houses, and knocked at the door again. She seemed pleased to see him return. She must have taken a liking to him.

'Ah, you're back,' she said in her soft Lancashire voice. 'I thought you might. Another came while you were away, but I didn't like him at all. He looked like one to drink and smoke heavily, and I didn't want him, so I told him it was taken. And now you're back. Are you going to take it?'

When she mentioned smoking and drinking he felt a twinge of conscience, but said nothing. She must have formed a pretty high opinion of him.

'I'll bring my stuff around,' he said.

'It's a week in advance.'

He gave her a pound note, and she went down the hall to get him a receipt, wheezing and chuckling to herself. He looked around the room again and tried to shake off his depression, but the place gave him the creeps. Through the window he could see the houses across the road, rotten and miserable-looking, with the paint peeling off their walls. Their windows were permanently blotted out with blinds,

some were boarded over, and one wall of the house immediately opposite was propped up with two heavy beams. He felt disgusted that he should have to live there, but he knew that he had to take the place. There was nothing else, and he couldn't spend any more time looking. He had already wasted a fortnight, and the job started on Monday.

She came shuffling down the hall, her face wreathed in smiles, with a bit of paper and a florin in her hand. She shut the door and put the key on a ledge by the front door. 'Always leave the key here,' she said, 'so that the meter man can get in.'

He nodded and skipped down the steps to the street and walked quickly up the hill towards the tram lines. He had never thought of living in a place like this, but he would have to be back with his belongings before nightfall, and then he would pull his blind down too.

He worked late at night and in the mornings left the room about a quarter to nine, when everyone else in the street had long been gone. He had lunch and dinner in town and came home about nine o'clock, after reading in the library for several hours. He would unlock his door and bring in the milk bottle that she always left just outside, and put his bag down on the table he had bought, and light the gas and make himself a cup of tea. Then he would take the books and papers out of his bag and start work once more by the light of his reading lamp. At about eleven he would make another cup of tea and then get into bed after a visit to the back. He always walked about the room on tip toe in his slippers at these times, for he could never be sure whether she was listening to him or not. Her room was next to his, and he could hear her asthmatical breathing coming through the wall as if there was nothing between them but the dingy wallpaper.

He was completely solitary during those first months of his new job, hardly speaking to anyone except in the course of his work, reading silently in the library when it got dark, coming home late and making his cup of tea and then reading till midnight before rolling into bed to lie for another lonely hour listening to the asthmatical breathing in the next room, the occasional whispers of lovers in the alley across the road, and the creaking of the wallpaper when the wind was up. And all the time he was tormented by his thoughts. When was he going to get out of it? He felt

trapped, but how could he escape? Despair and loneliness would tear at him so that he felt he was already in his grave, that his tiny room, the slums, were stifling him, and that if he died nobody would know anything about it, that he would be buried in a pauper's grave and forgotten by the world. He longed for the old companionship of the air force, and almost wished the war was still on.

One night when he came home a little earlier than usual he saw her sitting on the verandah in the darkness. At first he did not notice her, but became aware of her presence and her heavy breathing as he opened the front door. He looked around and saw her face gleaming in the reflected street light.

'You work late?' she said softly.

'I'm just back.'

'Yes, you work hard.'

He opened the door of his room and switched on the light, and it shone through the window on to the verandah. He did not pull down the blind.

'Would you like a cup of tea?' he said through the window, and she said she would.

He lit the gas and opened his case and took out the books, but he didn't switch on the reading lamp. He was conscious all the time of her presence just outside the window. When he handed her the cup of tea she sighed and said, 'Annie's late home tonight. She hasn't been in for tea yet.'

'Daughters like to have their fun,' he said. He felt odd and above it all with his war years heavy on him. He leaned on the window sill and they talked quietly in the darkness. He had switched off the light.

'You're country bred, Mr Rayner,' she said. 'You don't like the city?'

'My people live in the Waikato. I'd rather be on the farm now than in this place.'

'Annie and I came from Kawhia originally. My husband had a farm there too, and when he died we sold it and came here to live. I wanted Annie to get the benefit of living in the city now she's growing up. It doesn't do to be stuck in the country all your life. I like the country, mind you, but I felt it would be better for us here, and easier to live. I'm getting on in years now.'

As she sat there on the bench in the darkness, wheezing painfully every time she spoke or moved her position on the boards, the pattern of her mind was unexpectedly revealed

to him, simple, clear, and strong. He seemed to know her intimately in a moment, and yet at the same time he felt there was something deep down in her that he could not read. There was a kind of distraction about her, a hint of inner suffering in her breathless spasms and sudden silences, in the things she did not say. They were both unhappy, and the bond of silence drew them together so that he felt a deep affection for her grow in him. And yet nothing was ever said.

'I'll go in now,' she said, handing him her cup through the window. She got up and groaned and panted along the verandah and down the hall, making the house tremble with her weight. 'Annie'll be home soon, I feel sure.'

It was that night that the moaning in the next room began. He woke up in the darkness and his body was wet with perspiration and every hair on his head was pricking. His heart pounding, he heard it coming through the wall: 'Oh, oh, oh!' But it was not ordinary groaning. She was shouting out loud in her pain, and then weeping and calling out. 'What is it? What is it? Why don't you look after me? Annie! Annie!' But all the time she was trying to suppress it so that she shouldn't wake him. He knew it came through clenched teeth and the force of her indomitable will. Only sometimes it must have blotted out her consciousness so that she screamed out loud. And then he heard Annie's voice. 'Go to sleep Mum. You'll wake Mr Rayner.'

He lit a cigarette but was afraid to move in the bed in case she should hear him and know she had woken him up. He clenched his fists and looked up at the loose piece of wallpaper on the ceiling that moved uneasily when the wind was up. At last the moaning died away and he went to sleep again, but his dreams were terrible.

A week later it happened again, and then it began to come more frequently, and he heard movements in the night and 'Oh, oh, don't touch me,' and Annie's whispered voice pleading and coaxing and then silence.

One Saturday Annie asked if he would like to move into the room across the corridor, and since there was nothing to say he agreed, and that afternoon they shifted his belongings across and the girl moved hers into his. Now the moaning was not so loud at night.

Annie only spoke to him once. 'Mum can't sleep,' she said. 'She's in terrible pain. She has to sit in a chair all

night to ease it. We've called the doctor in and she'll have to go into hospital soon for an operation. They think she has a cyst.'

He did not know what to say, but murmured words of condolence.

One night when he came home she was sitting on the verandah in her usual place. He was astonished to see how white her face had become. It did not seem possible for human skin to be so white. There were deep semi-circular lines, like grooves gouged out with a nail, under her eyes, but her face was as fat as ever. Her hair hung in wisps of white that she hadn't the energy to put back, and her eyes were red with prolonged crying. She seemed ashamed that he should see her, and for a moment tried to get up and go inside before he reached her.

'It's a warm night,' he said.

'Yes. I canna sleep. I'm trying to get a breath of air before Annie comes home.'

He wanted to ask her to have a cup of tea with him, but she looked at him with such silent agony that he went quickly into his room and shut the door. For a long time he couldn't concentrate on what he was reading, but at last the rhythm of the words drugged his mind, and he read on till midnight, not hearing her move past his door down the passage. There were no groans that night, and he slept soundly. The next night when he came home Annie told him she had gone to the hospital.

But the horror of it was still in the room with him. How could the human body stand such pain? he thought. He remembered how poor Hans had died. The plane had pranged on take-off, dipped a wing and then cartwheeled into the coconut palms alongside the strip before it blew up with its three thousand pound bomb-load. The tail had split open and Hans had dropped out before the explosion. They had given him morphia, but every time he breathed his eyes had rolled back into his head with the pain, before he died. But that had been understandable. That was war, what might have happened to any of them, any day. That was the price they had had to pay, people like Hans, and himself too if he hadn't been lucky. But to come back to peace after the horror of it all, to get into civilian clothes and look about at the new world and then find this. What what the meaning of it? he wondered. What was the mean-

ing of life, if it came to that. It was like an equation. A man was born into the world with pain, he seemed to live half his years close to it, and then finally, unless he was very lucky, he died in pain. Who brought suffering into the world? he asked himself, but there was no answer. It had always been there.

The next time he saw her she was in a private nursing home, and the fear in her eyes was terrible to see. Her spirit was completely broken. She muttered something, 'You're a good man,' and the nurse wiped her chin with a cloth. He went out feeling that his last reserves of vitality were ebbing from him. From being merely alone he felt he had become utterly and irrevocably forsaken, so that if there had been a Catholic church handy he would have gone in and fallen on his knees before the Virgin Mother herself and prayed for his soul.

She died a week later and he went out to see Minnie.

'What's the matter?' she said. 'You look like death.'

'Could you put me up for a wee while?' he said. 'I don't want to stay at that place any more. The old girl had cancer.'

THOMAS O'BRIEN

CANDIDE IN SEARCH OF HEALTH

In the fair country of the Nuzeds, Candide was well content to remain and there to cultivate his garden. 'For in any case,' said he, 'I clearly shall never be able to afford to have another cultivate it for me.' He was pleasantly sustained in philosophical discourse by none other than the natural son of his old master Pangloss, by name Harpic. Himself no less a philosopher than his learned but unlucky sire, this worthy fellow had sought sanctuary in the land of Nuzed and found it so much to his liking that he had sent for Candide to follow him and share his good fortune. 'Here

in very truth,' he declared, ' is proof of my persevering parent's obstinate contention, that everything is for the best in this, the best of all Social Security Systems.'

Fortified by the six meals a day customary in those parts, Candide soon gained steadily in bodily substance while losing the burden of memories from his old evil days. In course of time, however, he fell prey to some sort of malaise, concerning which he took counsel with his philosophical friend.

' It is apparent,' decided the latter, ' that medical opinion is required. We are indeed fortunate in this country to have no dearth of Physicians.'

' Your lamented father,' remarked Candide, ' had little cause to trust the skill of medical persons (resulting as it did in the loss or destruction of some of his most useful members) nor in fact their good faith either (for the price of their ministrations was the whole sum of his pecuniary possessions).'

' We have changed all that,' replied his friend, ' under that Social Security of which you have heard me speak. Medical advice and the remedies of the Apothecary are available to all, without the expenditure of a single moidore, obol or escudo.'

' This, however,' objected Candide, ' will not compensate me for the possible loss of one or more useful member. Indeed, after further consideration, I am not even sure that my condition calls for the aid of a Physician at all.'

' The Ministry for Bodily Wellbeing insists that all ills call for the aid of a Physician.'

' Yet I greatly fear what may befall me at the hands of an evil Physician, or one poorly instructed in his art.'

' Such a remark,' said Harpic severely, ' might be construed as gross discourtesy by the B.M.A.* for it is well known that no Physician could possibly be evil, while all have had the advantage of instruction by the most learned teachers in the world. This does not mean, however, that you may not prefer one to another. For this reason, choice may be made among all the Physicians of the city, first one and then another and so on till he is found who can effect a cure: secure

* The precise significance of these symbols is disputed. While it is agreed that they refer to the Guild or Trade Union of the Physicians, they have been variously interpreted as Body Menders Amalgamated, Brotherhood of Medicinemen of Albion, Bearers of the Magic Amulet, etc. *Translator's Note.*

in the knowledge that such an unlimited sampling of Galen's disciples can cost you nothing.'

'Except, perhaps, like your excellent parent,' grumbled Candide, 'the loss of one or more useful members, which I cannot with equanimity contemplate, in this process of trial and error that you propose. If we wait a day or two, the pain may very well pass off.'

'Let me remind you,' said Harpic, in tones of unusual sternness, 'that your body belongs not only to you but also to the State and must therefore be preserved by all means possible. Come, take your hat and we will seek our first Physician.'

Together they set out for that part of the city where the Physicians had their business, coming at length to a street of fine buildings, outside which was standing a row of motor cars of impressive appearance.

'We will select as our Physician,' said Harpic, 'the owner of a good car; not the newest (which may well belong to one newly qualified and not therefore of wide, or indeed of any, experience), nor yet the most expensive (which may not have been paid for and may thus be an indication of anticipation rather than of success). It is true that a shabby car may in rare cases belong to a good Physician, but a Physician, good or otherwise, who is foolish enough not to have a good car is not the man for us.

They chose therefore a costly model of some years' standing, which led them to the apartments of one Doctor Abstract, where they found themselves in a very small room containing a very large number of people. To Candide's dismay at the prospect of waiting till all these people should have in turn had their audience, Harpic replied that barely twenty minutes would suffice, so expeditious would be their treatment: and so it eventuated. A door in the far wall opened and shut regularly at intervals of forty-seven seconds, so that before he was well able to consider what he was about, Candide found himself facing Doctor Abstract across a large table bearing two medical instruments and several hundred pieces of paper.

The doctor remarked that his name was unknown in the city, to which Candide replied that he was a stranger from a distant land.

'Then you must be neurotic.'

'Not so,' exclaimed Candide, 'I am usually held to be

Asiatic. There afflicts me, however,' indicating his person, 'a disagreeable sensation affecting this part of my body and a little pain which strikes me here.'

'As I said,' rejoined Doctor Abstract, 'neurotic. Sign here.'

Candide appended his name to one piece of paper, received another in return and was forthwith dismissed to the outer room, which he found to be again full of people.

'Thirty-two seconds,' said Harpic as he came up. 'How correctly did I predict that Doctor Abstract would immediately perceive the nature of your distemper.' Is it not marvellous that the skill of so learned a man should be at your disposal without the cost of one moidore, obol or escudo? Let us hasten to the Apothecary with the prescription that he has given you.'

The Apothecary's draught proved to be unpleasant to the palate without in any way relieving the symptoms. Indeed, in the days that followed Candide's pain became somewhat worse, so that Harpic declared that they should seek another Physician. They consulted in turn Doctors Biscuit, Culp, Dwindling and Emphasis, each of whom submitted the sufferer to an inquisition lasting respectively seventy-six, thirty-nine, thirty-eight and fifty-two seconds, and provided him with a prescription in exchange for which the Apothecary gave him draughts coloured white, green, red and yellow. So little benefit did he obtain from all these ministrations that (being now in considerable discomfort) he complained, 'I might be inclined to think little of the cleverness of all these clever men, who are none of them clever enough to cure me, were it not that to do so were base ingratitude, as they have each and all given me a fair share of their attention, without the reward of one moidore, obol or escudo.'

'That,' said Harpic in some confusion, 'is not strictly the case. These Physicians are in fact remunerated for each paper that you have signed to the extent of three obols, and the Apothecary in proportion, the money being paid by the State.'

'Then it is the State,' cried Candide, 'that must command the sum of my gratitude.'

'Not altogether,' replied his friend, 'for the State recovers the money from you in taxes.'

'Now I begin to understand,' said Candide slowly, 'something that has long puzzled me, that is, where the money goes that I pay in taxes. I am not sure that I would not

prefer to spend it in some other way. At all events, it seems to me that I would rather pay less taxes and see fewer Physicians.'

As his condition still failed to improve, he sought the advice of the distinguished Doctor Further, who was known to have only a small number of patients and yet contrived to keep as good a motor car as his colleagues. This excellent person gave Candide a secret potion by means of injection into the arm, at intervals of every two hours, which obliged him to pay a visit six times a day. After he had signed forty-one pieces of paper in return for this service, Candide asked timidly if it would not be as efficacious for the drug to be administered from a spoon, rather than by this inconvenient and somewhat painful method.

'Between ourselves,' replied Doctor Further, 'it would be equally or even more efficacious, from your point of view; but not from mine, for in place of forty-one fees for injections I should have only one for a prescription. In the coarse but picturesque language of commerce, there would no margin in it.'

Candide thereupon resumed his search, which took him in succession to three young Physicians named Gemutlicht, Hebetude and Ipswich. These were employed by the great Doctor Joss, who did not himself undertake the care of sick persons, being fully occupied with matters of accountancy. The number of patients in the waiting rooms of this brotherhood surpassed anything yet experienced by Candide, as did the speed with which they were dispatched. He found that he had to pay two visits on each occasion, one to be given a letter to the Hospital and a second to learn what had been reported on his case. At the Hospital, he was obliged on the first occasion to swallow a long tube, on the second occasion to be bled from the arm, and on the third to have a picture taken of his left foot.

'I did not think there was anything wrong with my foot,' he told Harpic.

'Now you can be quite sure there is not,' replied his friend. 'Our Physicians neglect no possibility.'

'Yet I still have my pain,' complained Candide, 'despite the fact that into the hands of Doctor Joss there have passed eighteen obols, from whose pocket there seems to be some doubt, though I suspect that in the long run it is my own. It appears on further consideration that, at the rates you

quote, not only Doctor Joss but all those other physicians, from Abstract to Ipswich, must amass each day a very great number of obols.'

'Curiously enough,' remarked Harpic, 'they all complain that, however much they make, most of it goes back to Walter.'*

Candide observed that the number of their patients was so great as to suggest that sickness is widespread among the Nuzeds.

'Among the many rights of a democratic people,' said Harpic, 'is the right to consider oneself ill. I have it on good authority that at least one-third of these patients so consider themselves without physical cause; that is, they are neurotic.' Candide recalled having heard that word before. 'People in Nuzed become neurotic because they do not care to give vent to their passions in public, in the manner of Europeans and other degenerate peoples, so that (except in time of war, which they find a healthy and useful outlet) they are constantly subject to unnatural restraints. A further cause of neurosis is the wearing of teeth made from mineral substances, which may be removed at will. An understandable timidity in exposing such oral furniture, in the natural expression of either mirth or rage, sets up still further tensions. I am told that many of the people are so afflicted.'

'I at least am one that does not specially disguise my feelings,' said Candide, 'and my teeth are firmly rooted in my head. Yet I have a pain which strikes me grievously below the midriff and goes right through into the shoulder blade. What is more, I cannot bear the sight of this pretty dish of eggs. Let us seek out yet another Physician.'

Doctor Kaper whom they then consulted, took so serious a view of the case as to give up nearly two and a half minutes to its consideration.

'If I were not so busy,' he said, 'I would subject you to a physical examination. As it is, I shall send you to a Specialist. Sign here.'

Harpic explained that such an examination might require the removal of some of Candide's clothes. For this service, the Specialist would require the payment of three gold moidores, of which the State would pay only the usual three

* At that time Keeper of the Privy Purse. *Translator's Note.*

obols. In any case, the Specialist was so busy that he could not undertake to see Candide for four weeks.

'Meanwhile my pain gets worse,' cried Candide. 'I have thrown up my breakfast and I am about to throw up my morning tea. Now I must wait without complaint for four weeks before taking off my clothes for a doctor. I begin to perceive whence comes the name "patient!"'

On the day before his appointment was due, Candide's complexion turned deep yellow and when he finally presented himself he was coloured a fine olive green. After making his examination, the Specialist informed him that he was suffering from a stone on the gall and that an operation would be necessary.

'It is a thousand pities,' said he, with a shake of the head, 'that before reaching such a regrettable condition you did not seek the advice of a Physician of repute. You people are all the same.'

Candide protested that he had consulted every Physician in town, if not from A. to Z., at least from Abstract to Joss.

'Medical etiquette forbids me to pass judgment on my colleagues,' said the Specialist, 'even if you are telling the truth, which you probably are not, like all patients; but in any event, the gentlemen you mention are not worth a can of beans.'

Candide thought to himself that such personal aspersions were rarely heard among the Nuzeds, who in general tend to say not what they think. Only one either rich or famous could thus afford to be frank and this Specialist was both rich and famous. Also, his first name was Frank.

As Candide, for his part, was not rich, he was not able to enter a Private Hospital for his operation; instead, his name was placed on the waiting list at the Public Hospital. In the ensuing weeks, a deep melancholy settled on him while he contemplated his verdant hue. Everything he saw took on a yellowish tinge and the few dishes allowed by the Specialist were nauseous to his palate. Nor did the prospect of being cut for the stone improve his jaundiced outlook.

Fortunately, the Hospital did not immediately require his reluctant presence. Many patients, it appeared, were needing similar operations but had to wait so long that they mostly either died or got better before their turn came to be admitted. This natural solution to the problem was cited by Harpic as yet one more example of the optimistic doctrine

of his eminent but ill-used progenitor, namely, that everything is for the best, etcetera, etcetera.

Resolved that he should be in the latter rather than the former category of Hospital patients, Candide began slowly to improve. His skin regained its natural colour, his pain ceased to occur, his pleasure in food returned. He even dared to believe that his stone had dissolved, or passed, or otherwise been brought to nought, without the aid of Physician or Barber Surgeon, but by natural means alone.

He propounded this belief at his third or fourth visit to the Hospital, which he attended at intervals of three months while waiting to be admitted. The young Physician there, into whose charge he had fallen, was much interested.

'What you say may very well be true,' he agreed. 'For myself, I can hardly tell, for I am not much experienced in these matters, being only these few weeks out of my apprenticeship.'

At his next visit, Candide found that this young man had left the Hospital to join the company of Doctor Joss. It seemed that he desired at an early date to discharge to the State the cost of his medical education and also to espouse a nurse to whom he had become contracted. He was furthermore abnormally addicted to large motor cars.

One day, nearly three years later, Candide was sent for to enter the Hospital for his operation. It availed him nothing to protest that he was already cured of his complaint. The operation duly took place, and to the annoyance of the many learned persons present, no abnormality could be detected. When he had recovered from the congestion of the lungs which followed the operation; when his wound (which became mortified and had to be sewn up four times) had at last closed; and when the burn on his back (caused by too hot a warming-pan) had finally healed, he found himself an object of reproach for having caused unnecessary trouble to an already overworked institution. On the day of his discharge, he contrived to read in the Hospital book what construction the Doctors had put upon his case. It was one word, 'Neurotic'.

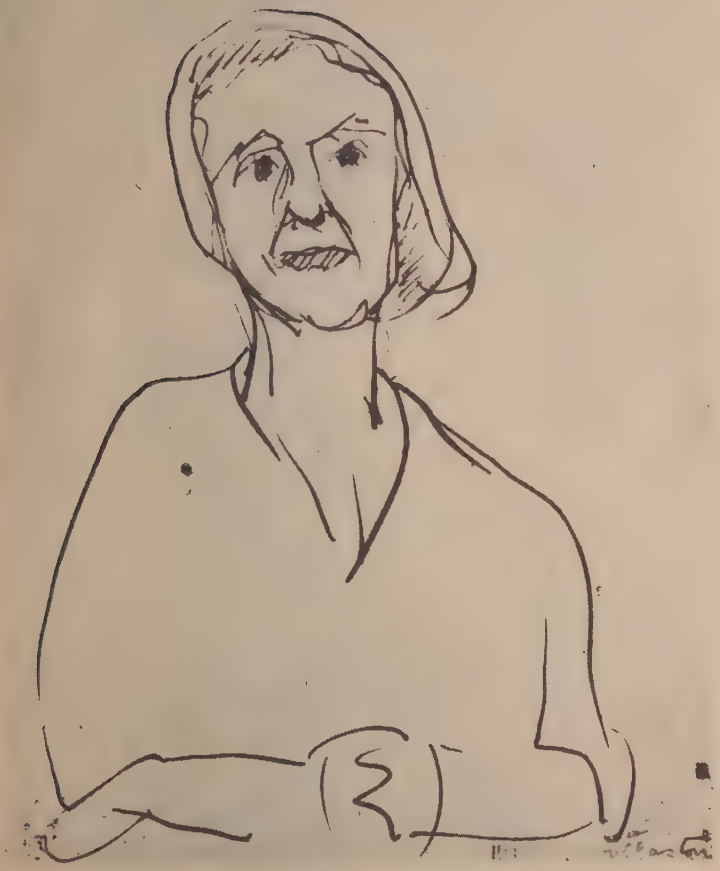
The following week, enfeebled in body but spiritually resolved, he took ship for the island of Potcorn, having first taken care to ascertain that there they have no Social Security, nor any Physicians.

R. N. O'REILLY

M. T. WOOLLASTON: ART AND DEVELOPMENT

MOUNTFORD TOSSWILL WOOLLASTON was born in Toko, in the backblocks of Taranaki, in 1910, and grew up on his parents' farm. At five he painted flowers. Lots of children paint flowers but Toss was told 'forcibly' that artists always starved. The world is always ready to sentence artists to pariahdom or starvation, all right then he would paint and starve. There probably is some connection between this romantic conception, with its austere philosophy of art and of life, and the smothered sensuality of his art. At any rate it is one of the facts of Mr Woollaston's life that must be recorded but I shall not try to explain it. In this article I want instead to trace the development of his paintings, and especially the development of his latest period of landscapes in oils which we in Wellington were able to see to good advantage in the recent Central Library exhibition of his work. The inhibitions, one would hazard, are dissolving.

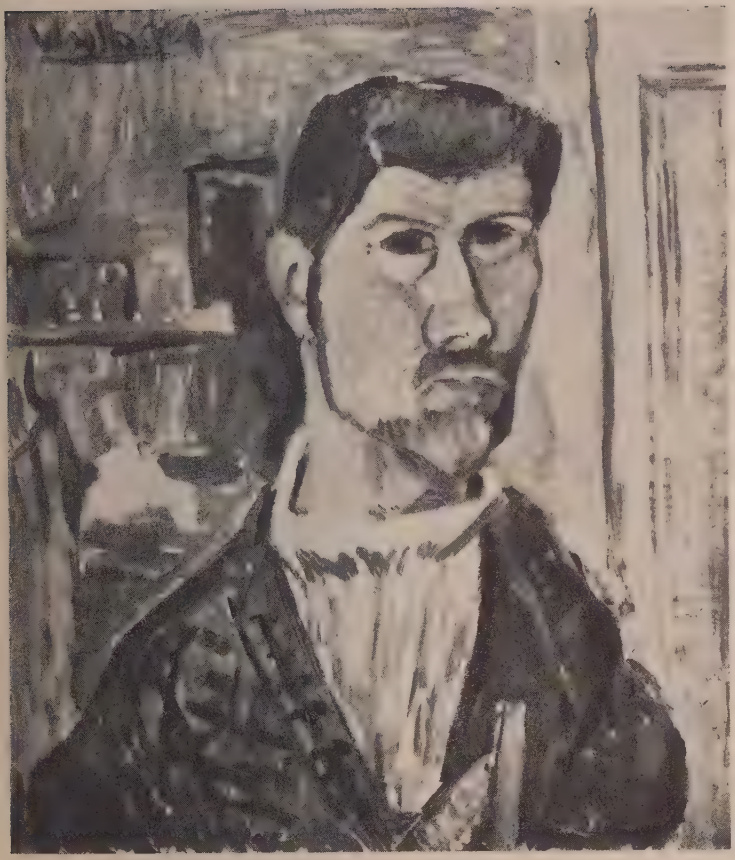
The facts known to me about Mr Woollaston's career are soon told. He came to the Nelson province in 1928 to do orchard work, fell amongst artists and did 'somewhat dreary' sketches in the off-season. He went to the Christchurch Art School in 1931 with the liveliest expectations and suffered deep disappointment and frustration. Liberation came from (1) R. N. Field, for the love of whose paintings he biked to Dunedin in 1932, and (2) Miss Flora Scales, who had studied in Germany and who opened his eyes to Cézanne (1934). Cézanne remains today the major influence. He was loaned a small piece of land (not in any sense a farm or farmlet) at Mapua, in the apple country about twenty miles from Nelson, and built himself a shack—just for somewhere to paint and lead the simple life. The surrounding country is very lovely but it is lovelier still after one has seen it described in his pictures. He married in 1936 and has raised a family of four. He works in an agricultural chemical works making colloidal sulphur. None of these circumstances: the isolation, or the daily job, facilitated his paint-



MY MOTHER. *Ink 1935* $6\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ins.

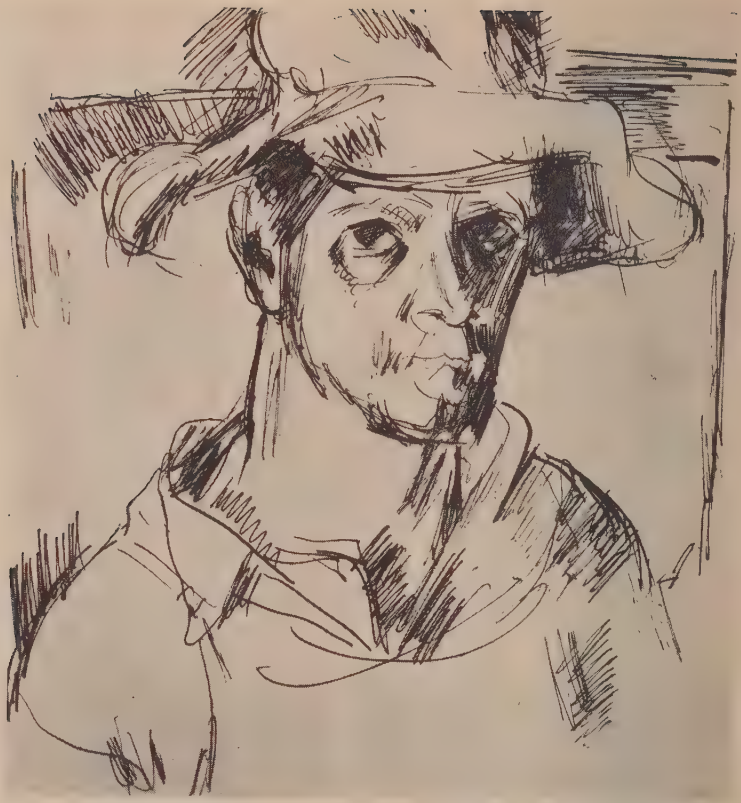
PORTRAITS BY M. T. WOOLLASTON

LILIAN ELLICE. *Charcoal 1936* $9\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{8}$ins.



SELF PORTRAIT. *Oil 1937* 17 × 14¼ins.

LIONEL MASSEY COLLECTION



SELF PORTRAIT. *Pen c. 1943* $8\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$ins.

ing and for many years, as his writings suggest, the problem of coping to find time for his art must have been acute. But it seems that this adjustment, which is, to a greater or lesser extent, shared by all artists in New Zealand, has now been made.

His friendship with Ursula Bethell dates from 1931. The warmth of her acceptance of his work and the stimulus of her intellect made her a powerful ally, when allies were few. Miss Bethell promoted a fund which enabled Mr Woollaston to devote his full time to painting for a period during 1938-9. Next to his present upsurge this seems to have been the time of his greatest development.

Of his 'pre-Scales' work little apparently remains, but the Wellington exhibition represented most of the phases of the 'post-Scales' very adequately, so that it now seems possible to assign rough periods and to indicate the type of work which characterizes them:

1934–7 Large charcoal contour drawings, later with oil colour added.
1937–42 Landscapes and portraits in oils.
1942–6 Watercolours.
1946–7 Pen and pencil drawings.
1947–8 Landscapes and some figure painting in oils.

Several large charcoal drawings of the first period remain, all portraits with a strong and sinuous line of which the one called *Ivan* is perhaps the most striking. Then came the application of colour to the drawings. This colour was applied with great delicacy and restraint in loose, sketchy touches: crimsons and greens subdued to dull pinks and *terre-verte* till they became almost an orchestration of greys. The *Portrait of the Artist's Wife* now in the collection of Dr J. C. Beaglehole is a good example.

About 1937 a new period began with a series of studies in oil, both of figures and landscapes, in which the colour itself defines the masses and creates spatial relations as in Cézanne's paintings. This period, which to many of us appeared the culmination, is represented best, amongst the landscapes, in the oils of the Rodney Kennedy collection. The reduction of strong colours till they smoulder out of superficially drab surfaces, becomes a definite Woollaston characteristic. Yellows now oust the pinks. All movement in these pictures seems not so much lost as suspended—it is

as though all the energy involved in their creation was arrested and turned back in the inhibitions of the artist so that like the moon they have no light of their own yet reflect a very pure light from an external source. And like the moon their silence. Amongst the figure studies of this period easily the best is the large *Woman in Lamplight* of which an unsatisfactory reproduction appeared a few years ago. Seen under the right conditions of rather subdued lighting, a kerosene lantern on a rough table creates, as it appears, its own illumination by which to define the reposeful figure knitting by its light. This as a sheer piece of naturalistic virtuosity is superb. Apart from one landscape in 1946 that is best grouped in the same period, this particular flow of oils seems to have dried up after 1942.

In the interregnum occasioned perhaps by the heavy industrial work of the war Mr Woollaston seems to have confined himself to watercolours and pen and pencil drawings. The watercolours however provide some of the links between the old and the new oils. They began about 1939 as impressionist studies of figures in clear reds, yellows and greens, but by 1944 there appear a few post-impressionist pieces in which thin brown watercolours seem miraculously to change towards purples and indigos, or towards rust or vague yellows; while what might be taken for scribbling with a brush appears to create the lovely, awkward hillsides of Mapua. The effect created by this deliberate paucity of means is incredibly rich and suggestive.

I referred to 'scribbling'—which also describes the initial effect on the beholder of the artist's black and white drawings. I still remember the impression made by such a 'scribble' in 1940—watching a valley and trees emerge from a few dirty lines. Mr Woollaston's facility with line dates as I have suggested from the very beginning of the post-Scales epoch, if not before. One of the most impressive drawings of all is the ink drawing *My Mother,* reproduced here, which goes back to 1933. I should however like to see a chronological arrangement of his drawings from all periods. This would provide what we lack now to trace fully the evolution of his present work. However we do know that this new period, which began last year, was preceded by a great output of ink and conté drawings which anticipate the sweeping liberation of line from contour exhibited in the paintings.

The new landscapes in oils most people have found diffi-

cult. The careful brushwork of the 1937-1941 landscapes has been superseded by great swipes of coarse colour: orange-browns, bricky reds, chocolate and inky blues and greens, whose initial obscurity seems in some way connected with the clarity which many have discovered in the old for the first time. Nevertheless the new, when their form does emerge, are more solid, more spacious, and have more light and a richer colour effect than the old. The arrangement of screens in the Wellington show did enable a comparison to be made of the two major periods. It allowed them to be seen from a considerable distance with the screen of the new oils about ten feet further away. Comparison reveals the pictorial organization of the new work to be so much better than that of the old that the latter seems almost stilted. The advance as I have suggested was probably mediated by the bold and even reckless line of the black and white drawings, and the colour experiments of the watercolours.

There are one or two new figure paintings among the new oils but it does not seem to me that these have come off. This apparent failure may perhaps be temporary. The human body must offer special problems to this kind of naturalism. Perhaps, however, Mr Woollaston will find, as Colin McCahon has done, that the human component requires a more formal approach or it is lost. Indeed I suspect that the whole evolution of Mr Woollaston's figure painting from the boldly contoured portraits in 1935, on to the impressionist and post-impressionist work of the forties, bears witness to this loss. In any case this evolution does not run parallel, except in certain technical features, with the evolution of his superb landscapes.

Pictures are not indifferent objects to be casually admired or disregarded like hills and flowers. They make claims upon our intellect and claims upon our moral susceptibilities, for they describe and appraise what can be seen or can be visualized. Their power to please runs concurrent with our critical faculties or it fails. It is therefore reasonable that the appeal of good art is frequently a delayed appeal, and that immediate appeal often turns out to be ephemeral. It is also clear that when people reject the claims of art the heat of their rejection depends on the destruction which to admit the claims would wreak on the tissue of their sentiments.

Mr Woollaston's paintings make quite modest claims.

They do not as McCahon's have done invite us to witness the extreme agony of the accused human being. They are descriptions of already visible and individual things, and serve to show these things to us in refreshingly new ways. Particularly is this so, I feel, in the case of Mr Woollaston's landscapes. He has mastered the problem of depicting space, and the pictures evince his delight at the coincidence of light and form, a delight in which we should be glad to participate. Still the world has not been glad to participate and it seems clear the artist in the past took the rejection keenly. The new spirit in his work, then, is as much a cause for rejoicing as the growing acceptance of it by the public.

Bibliographical Note

Reproductions of Mr Woollaston's work, which do not include any of his major landscapes, may be found as follows:

Portrait of the Artist's Wife (or *Edith Knitting*). Oil over charcoal, 1936. *Art in New Zealand,* September, 1937; and *The Studio,* April, 1948 (both in colour).

Mother and Child. Charcoal, c. 1936. *Art in New Zealand, loc. cit.*

Direct pen drawing, c. 1936. *Ibid.*

Wellington. Oil over charcoal, 1936. *Ibid.* (in colour).

Woman in Lamplight. Oil, 1942. *Ibid.,* September, 1943.

Self portrait. Pen drawing, c. 1943. *Ibid.*

Nan. Conté, c. 1944. *Yearbook of the Arts in New Zealand,* No. 1, 1945.

The Boy (or *Joe Woollaston*). Oil over charcoal, 1936. *Ibid.,* No. 2, 1946.

Boy Reading (or *Joe Reading*). Pen drawing, 1947. *Ibid.,* No. 3, 1947.

The September, 1937, issue of *Art in New Zealand* also contained an interview with Mr Woollaston (p. 7-12). The reporter seems to have felt the pictures required explanation rather than acceptance: he was most solicitous with suggestions for explanations and the interview reads very stiltedly as a result. Mr Woollaston however seems to have felt constrained to explain and even sets out a philosophy of art in an article entitled: *The Origin of Beauty and the Function of Appearance in Art* (ibid., March, 1938, p. 165-6), and also

in a shorter statement, *Toss Woollaston Explains Himself* (ibid., September, 1943, p. 13). Neither of these seems to me to explain very much, but, in any case, the explanations made by his pictures are much more important.

JOHN REECE COLE

A TOUCH OF THE OLD TROUBLE

'I'D RATHER my daughter went and lived with a man if there were something to him,' Mrs Andrews said, 'than see her married to someone as dull as her father.'

'Emily!' Mrs Green said. 'How can you say such a thing?'

'Well, it's true my dear.' Mrs Andrews' lips fell into a depressed curve, but her large shoulders and bosom shook under the force of her voice. 'Rather that than see Judith tied to a man like George. He's got no interests at all. Never knows what to do with himself. Doesn't even read!'

'He keeps the place nice,' Mrs Green said; she was small, pert as a bird, and lived next door. 'I must say the garden's a credit to him.'

'Garden; that's all he ever thinks about. Yes, and the fowls. Stands by the run for hours just watching them. Can you imagine it? Whatever does he see in them?'

'Bring in a few eggs, I suppose,' Mrs Green said. 'They're hard enough to get these days.'

'What do you think he's doing now?' Mrs Andrews swung her elbows as she cleared the table. 'Sorry,' she said, replacing Mrs Green's cup. 'Thought you'd finished. He's down in the shed, messing about with home brew.'

'Better that,' Mrs Green said, 'than always in the pub like my Tom.'

'But home brew. It's so—so vulgar! He's spent most of his time down there for months now. Still, I suppose it

keeps him out of the way. He's no use in the house, and he's only a bore when I've got visitors.'

'Got someone coming tonight, dear?'

Mrs Andrews switched on the electric oven. 'Judith's bringing some of her repertory friends. Must get a move on and do some baking. There isn't a thing in the house.'

Frowning, Mrs Green turned from the window. She gathered the crumbs from her lap and dropped them into the saucer. 'That woman,' she said. Her thin nose flickered. 'And her husband hardly dead a year.'

'What say?' Mrs Andrews turned off a tap sharply and the water creaked in the pipes behind the wall. 'Oh her, across the road.'

'I hear the car when he brings her home at night. Makes him stop at the corner and she walks the rest. Don't know who she thinks she's fooling.'

The oven had begun to tick. Mrs Green drained her cup and carried it through to the sink. 'Thanks dear. The *Women's Journal* I popped in with is on the table.'

George Andrews placed the rake carefully down behind the door of the shed. It would be out of the way there, anyone coming in wouldn't tread on it and be struck by the handle. He lifted the cover on a small keg in the corner; the new brew appeared to be working nicely. Sitting down on an empty packing case he began to roll a cigarette. He had a narrow bald head, with tufts of grey hair above his small ears. He pinched the ends of the cigarette and put the tobacco scraps back into the tin. He reached up to the light switch, then lowered his hand without putting on the light. It was pleasant sitting in the twilight. The trees by the window had become shadows, and the voices of children in the street were sharp in the still air.

It would be just on pub closing time. He felt relieved that he hadn't accepted Tom Green's invitation to have a drink at the Central. The bar was always crowded on Friday nights. Andrews disliked crowds at any time; and all that pushing and shoving for a few beers wasn't worth it. He avoided Tom Green whenever possible. He felt himself shrink remembering Green's bursting blue eyes and sly, surprised expression as he told his numerous stories. Andrews had never got used to that sort of thing; not even after four years in the army during the first world war.

He hunched his neck and shoulders as if he were suddenly cold. He had never been as horrified in his life as once when he had been particularly hard up and he had tried to earn some extra money by working as a scene shifter for a touring vaudeville company that came to the town. He hadn't gone back after the first night.

Explaining to Mrs Andrews afterwards he had said, 'Those theatrical people! The language and the way they carried on at the back of the stage was appalling! And the stuff they drank. From what I could see of it the women were worse than the men. Dressed in such scanty things too; some in practically nothing at all. Why they—' But his face had become hot and red and he had been unable to go on.

Andrews switched on the light, getting to his feet; but a sudden heaviness and pain in his chest made him sit down again. He hunched forward pushing his fingers against his chest, until his breathing gradually became easier.

There was a soft thud of footsteps on the lawn. Andrews raised his head, listening. A man appeared in the light thrown through the open door.

'Thought you'd be down here,' Joe King said.

'Come in, come in,' Andrews said.

Joe King screwed his eyes up against the light. 'God, man, you look bad.'

'Had a bit of a twinge,' Andrews said. 'The old trouble.'

His face was grey, making the small red and purple veins stand out on his nose and cheeks. 'I'm all right now. Have a beer?'

Joe King continued to stare at Andrews. 'Have you seen a doctor lately?'

'No use. Not a bit. I've had it since I was in the trenches.'

Opening a bottle, Andrews took two glasses off a ledge decorated by a row of empty seed packets. 'Graham called me in this morning; about promotion. Said he'll bring my name up at the next directors' meeting. But not before he got a bit in about customers complaining about being kept waiting at my counter and my buying recommendations that lost the firm money.' Screwing one eye shut he raised a froth topped glass against the light. 'But some of our blokes who were in the army don't want their jobs back. Directors can't overlook the long time I've been with the firm.'

'No more overtime, then, eh?'

'Not so many hours on the old feet. Find it hard to last

out these days.' Andrews' gaze moved to his bicycle propped against the wall. If his salary were increased they might be able to afford a car, as Emily often suggested. He began to feel cheerful at the thought of weekends at the beach and long drives into the country. Emily reminded him that guests had to leave early to catch the last bus. 'If we had a car we could run them home,' she would say.

'Came to see you about bowls,' Joe King said, sitting down on a box. 'Season opens next week; big day on Saturday. You be there?'

'Expect so,' Andrews said.

The light spun on Joe King's spectacles as he shook his head. 'Don't know whether to join up again or not,' he said. 'I seem to have lost interest.'

They drank in silence, their thoughts going back to the club. Joe King was secretary of one of the smaller trade unions, and it had been some time before Andrews had noticed the way the senior club members increased their digs about the Labour Government and the wharfies when Joe was around. And they tended to overlook him when tournament teams were being made up.

It's that upper crust, Andrews thought. They seem to run the club. He had no particular wish to go there again. But Emily had pointed out that Graham, the staff manager, was prominent in the club, and that it would be an advantage to get to know him there. Graham, a tall sarcastic man with speculative eyes, who rarely spoke to people unless they addressed him first, was skip of one of the teams, and Andrews had been uneasy whenever he came near him on the greens. Yet it seemed as if joining the bowling club had been worthwhile. He could hear Emily's voice, 'The trouble with you is you haven't any push. No wonder you never get on.'

'Yes,' Andrews said, 'I expect I'll go along.'

There was a dry scraping overhead as they sat absorbed. A breeze had come up in the darkness, swinging the trees against the iron of the roof. Joe King was a sad shrunken man of fifty. During the depression he had worked on relief, digging drains. It was said that he had spent much of his time sitting on the bank reading political pamphlets.

Though he worked hard for his interests, he never went out of his way for a political argument. Andrews was fond of saying, 'Joe's not one of those cranks, he just does his

job.' He had once told Andrews that he didn't believe that everything had changed for the better. 'Neighbours used to drop in for a yarn, and people helped each other when things were bad,' he said. 'Now they rush by with little black bags and haven't got time to say good-day.'

'Visitors up front?' King said, refilling his glass. He had never been asked into the house. He suspected that Mrs Andrews didn't approve of his friendship with her husband.

'Yes,' Andrews said. 'Judith's friends, the theatre mob. I had a meal early and got out of the way.' He laughed, his face had become flushed, his eyes cheerful. 'Young folks don't want an old fogey like me around.'

Joe King nodded at the floor.

'I got half a dozen of Capstan for them this morning,' Andrews said. 'The girl in the shop is getting to know me. She slipped me the extra ones. Judith smokes, and Emily says you've got to have something to offer people. You know how women are.'

When he had learned that Judith belonged to the Repertory Society, Andrews had become alarmed.

'Don't be an ass, George,' Emily had said. 'Repertory's not like those travelling companies. Why, their members come from some of the most well-to-do families in town.'

Andrews soon had to admit that Judith's friends were different from theatrical people of his own experience. Their coming to the house brought many changes. Emily bought an Indian rug and a new suite of furniture, Andrews' old and comfortable chair was sent down to the auction—Judith had protested to her mother, but it had been sent, nevertheless—and the mantel radio was traded in on a radio-gramophone.

'Now they all sit around in the dark, just the fire going, stiff with their eyes shut,' Andrews had told Joe King. 'You'd think you'd run into one of those spiritualist stunts.'

Swelling out his lips that had shrunk around his false teeth, Joe King said, 'Good brew this, George.' He suddenly became serious. 'Fine girl, Judith. Fine girl.'

'Yes,' Andrews said. 'Thoughtful. Never forgets her old dad. Always wanting me to meet her friends. But I'm just as happy down here.'

He reached for another bottle. 'Not that I don't like them, mind you. Find the girls a bit la-de-dah, and I can't say that I've got much time for that what's-his-name Beatty.

Donald Beatty. You might have seen him; the one that wears his hair long like a film star. He's always talking about books written by authors you never hear of—foreigners most of them.'

He had rolled a cigarette and paused to run his tongue along the paper. 'Still, he's clever, there's no denying that. But Arthur Kenny . . . he's the one. Calls me Pop. Always says, "Hello Pop, how're the bowls going?"'

Andrews released a cheerful laugh. 'Or he cracks a joke to make out he knows a bit about the game. "Been kissing kitty lately, Pop?" he says.'

Andrews stared at the froth collar on his glass. 'He's a fine lad. You know where you are with him. From what I can see of it, he's the only one of the mob who went to the war. Fine lad.'

One hand pressed behind to get the crick out of his back, Joe King finally eased himself to his feet. 'Better be getting on,' he said. 'Got one or two things to clean up before I turn in.'

George Andrews slept in the small room that opened on to the back verandah. He had just got into bed when there was a knock and Judith called, 'Are you there, father?'

He pulled up the covers, thinking that he would rather Judith called him 'dad' as she had until recently. 'Come in, dear,' he said.

Judith sat on the bed. Her thick, wheat-coloured hair was drawn back from her face and coiled at the back of her neck.

'I'm worried about you, father,' she said. 'You haven't looked at all well lately.'

'I'm all right, girlie. Don't worry about me.'

Looking at Judith he felt proud. How quickly, it seemed, she had grown up. It was her eyes, he decided, their sort of aged blue, that made you feel that she was older than her twenty two years. He now felt that it would seem silly of him to ask her to call him 'dad'. Even when she was a child she had been rather stiff and stern. Emily used to refer to her as Madam.

They had kept her at high school until she was eighteen, and would somehow have managed to have sent her to university had she wanted to go. And Andrews had agreed with Emily that as she was delicate (she had had a cough since she had pleurisy during her last year at high school) there

was no real reason why she should have to work.

'Athol Barclay has asked us—mother and me—out to his parents' place for the weekend,' Judith said. 'They've a sheep station twenty miles out. We're leaving in the morning; be back Monday night—that is if you're all right, father?'

'I'll be all right. Fine. Going to take it easy at home for a change.'

'We'd love you to come too, father.' Judith looked down at the plastic toe of her shoe. 'But Athol's only got the small car, and it would be rather too much of a crush . . .'

'Have a good time, girlie,' Andrews said, and when Judith reached the door, 'Did Arthur Kenny come round tonight?'

'No, not tonight, father.'

In the unusually quiet house, Andrews took the evening paper into the sitting room. He decided that he would get something to eat later; though he'd spent all day in the garden with only a cup of tea at midday he still had no appetite.

He stretched out on the lounge, crossing his stockinged feet in front of him. After glancing at the cable headlines and the local news he let the paper fall to the floor, and pressed his fingers against his chest under the flannel shirt. The pain was there again, not stabbing this time but heavy, gripping. In an instant he was cold, and he saw that the fireplace was full of ashes from the previous night. He would clear it out and build a fire when the pain ceased.

His gaze fell on the glass front of the cabinet where Emily kept the port and sherry. That was it, a nip of something should help. He lifted out a large bottle of gin, half full, and hesitated. He almost never drank spirits and didn't like gin. But the other bottles were empty. He poured himself a small tumbler full.

By the time he got to the bottom of the glass he had ceased to screw up his face after each sip, his stomach was warm and the heavy feeling was going from his legs.

He filled the glass again and opened the radio-gramophone. Turning the knobs he found he couldn't remember how it was worked. The light came on and there was a steady hum from the speaker, but he couldn't get the least sign of a station. Finally he closed the cabinet and went back to the lounge. He stared at the ceiling, the house was very still; for an instant he felt as if the silence were drawing in around him.

He got up hurriedly and refilled the glass. He pushed his fingers under his shirt and a recent remark of his father's came back sharply. 'If you're not careful, my boy, I'll see you out!' The old man had gone on happily boasting of his own good health. Andrews felt something close to repulsion remembering his father's shining, almost unlined face and his coarse white hair poking over the back of his high collar like straw from a sack. Though he was almost eighty, the old man never missed a Sunday church service. He helped collect the offering and trotted down the aisle, eager, nodding and beaming. At church socials he sat among the ladies, drinking cups of tea and eating cake. Since his wife died, he seemed to have taken on a new life.

Andrews drank the gin in short gulps, thinking of his mother. Yes, she had been a fine woman, strict, good-living. In fact the church that the old man now attended so regularly had, in the first place, been his mother's; it was she who had brought religion into the family. Andrews could almost feel again the harsh collar and the swish of the gown he had worn as a choirboy.

He no longer went to church; army life had brought the first break, and Emily always said that she couldn't be bothered with that sort of thing. But he had never forgotten his mother's way of living and he felt sure that he had never done anything that would have offended her. Though she had died only a few years back, his clearest image of her went back to 1914, when his company were leaving to join a troopship. His mother had worn a large hat and black veil at the railway station. As the train began to move out she had cried, making a loud harsh noise, her tears soaking through the veil.

Andrews sat up with a jerk. Misery had risen in him till he felt as if he were choking. Something seemed to have gone wrong with his eyes; objects in the room appeared to have become smaller, as if they were a long way off. Nerves a bit on edge, he told himself and sank back again, trying to relax. He looked at the clock. Too early to go to bed. Tired as he felt, he'd never sleep. He became aware of the silence again. He got up and walked around the room.

'I can't stand this,' he said, and his voice remained in the room long after he had spoken. He looked at the clock again. He'd have to get out of the house; talk to someone. Finding his shoes and hat, he almost ran down to the shed

for his bicycle. Halfway along the street he stopped, alarmed. Where was he going? What was he doing with his bicycle?

He pushed on, feeling almost sheepish, wheeling the bicycle. Joe King might be home, he didn't live very far away. His limbs were already difficult to control; he knew it would be foolish to try to ride.

By the time he reached the corner of the street where Joe King lived he was wobbling from the fences to the kerb and he had forgotten where he was going. Half lifting the bicycle around the corner, his trouser cuff caught in the chain and he crashed on to the footpath.

A long time seemed to have gone by when he got to his feet, and there was music coming from a nearby building and the steady lumbering noise of people dancing.

He dropped the bicycle against the fence and walked towards the light in the doorway of the hall from which the music was coming. He nodded to the man sitting at a table in the lobby. The man stared. 'Can't let any more in,' he said.

'Just watch for a minute,' Andrews said. 'Don't mind, do you? Jus' watch for a minute.'

A grin settling on his red perspiring face, Andrews leaned in the doorway following the dancers as they moved beneath the lanterns and vivid paper streamers. He took off his hat and dabbed a handkerchief to his face and shining head.

The shrill exciting music made him feel bright, elated. It was hot in the hall and there were few long evening gowns. The floor seemed full of women's legs straining against close-fitting skirts as they followed the sweep of their partners' steps.

He had reluctantly turned to leave when two girls with their overcoats resting on the shoulders of their dresses like capes pushed out ahead of him.

'What! Going so soon?' the doorman said.

'Got to work in the morning,' one of the girls said. The other giggled.

Andrews followed slowly. He caught his breath in the fresh air; it appeared to come hot and cold against his face. His head commenced to throb. After walking a short distance he remembered his bicycle and went back for it.

He had been struggling against his swinging limbs and the bicycle for a long time, it felt, when he discovered that he was lost. He stopped and looked about him. His head

felt light and swollen and he could scarcely see. He swayed, loudly humming spurts of a tune the dance band had played, and which he couldn't get out of his mind.

Two people were talking on a corner under a street light. He plunged off towards them. Their voices were girls' and as he came nearer he heard one say, 'Goodnight.' And they parted in opposite directions.

Dismayed he stopped, then called after them. Their footsteps kept on. One had already disappeared, but he could see the quick movement of the other's light stockings. He straightened up the bicycle and moved after her, holding his muscles tight, concentrating desperately on moving more quickly. The legs were flashing faster. He called again. Striking his knee against a pedal he was scarcely aware of the pain that went down his leg, but in an instant he was desperate and angry. His breath rapid and hoarse in his throat, he managed to trot, the bicycle wobbling and bouncing.

The sharp click of high heels on the pavement changed to a scuffle on loose metal. The girl had turned into a drive leading up to a house set back from the street. Andrews dropped the bicycle and ran to the gateway. He stopped and held on to a post, gulping and wheezing. Blood rushing in his head and ears blotted out everything except the long dim drive and the girl disappearing at the far end. He let go of the post and began to move up the drive, the metal scattering under his feet.

A large man was leaning over Andrews when he woke. He blinked against the daylight coming in through a small high window, and the pain behind his eyes went quivering through his body. He became aware of the man's uniform and the feeling of distant horror seemed to swell up and burst inside him.

'God, what happened?' he said holding his head. 'What happened?'

'Take it easy,' the policeman said. 'There's your breakfast.'

Long after the door had closed Andrews remained with his hands pressed against his face, struggling to bring back the events of the night. He knew that some time earlier he had been taken into an office where a charge had been read out and a lot of questions had been asked him. But

he hadn't been able to take it in. He'd kept falling asleep. He could recalling drinking the gin (fumes kept coming up, sickening him) and the dancers in the hall. But after that there was nothing. Just the horrible dream in which he was running and running. There was a big house, its windows all dark. He couldn't be sure whether he had been running towards or away from the house. Yet now the memory seemed too strong to have been a dream. His stomach went cold. Somewhere a woman had been screaming.

The morning moved on, almost as incredible and unreal (only the pain was real, and the desperate need to sleep). The police sergeant, smiling and friendly one instant, roared and banged his desk the next, while a pale detective coughed and shuffled in the background. Every time they shook him or shouted, blood drained from his head bringing shadows into his vision, sending their voices ringing into the distance.

Wilson, the lawyer they had brought in for him, (the only lawyer whose name he could recall) made notes, screwed up his face, frowned and said very little.

They had taken away Andrews' braces, and he reached the bottom of his shame each time they took him out of the cell and he had to hold his trousers up. Gradually, with a kind of shock, he realized that the policemen moving about the building were completely unconcerned about him, they scarcely looked at him, and, to his horror, they laughed and joked among themselves.

In the cell again he dropped on to the bed. It was so low he had to keep his legs straight out in front of him. Why did they keep on questioning? He forced back a shrill urge to laugh. Women's underclothing! It was ridiculous. They wanted him to admit that he had stolen some women's underclothing. There must have been a mistake. It was all a mistake. He found himself breaking through the numb whirling in his head to listen to his heart. It raced, then seemed to stop for seconds at a time.

He had told them again and again that he hadn't stolen anything. In the end Wilson, too, had seemed annoyed. When they were alone he had said that the evidence was too strong against him; taking that line wouldn't get him anywhere. It would be better to admit it, to plead guilty. Then the police wouldn't call witnesses. He would stress Andrews' previous good character, his wellknown and respected family, (Wilson said that he knew his father well)

and the magistrate would recognize it, well, as a lapse, and would be almost certain to treat the matter reasonably.

Yet why, Andrews had persisted, should he admit something he hadn't done? And he continued to hold out long after he knew, far down within, that something had happened. It was something he couldn't even admit to himself. There was a peculiar feeling of relief, almost of triumph, beneath the pain and wretchedness. Spurts of elation kept coming up and he found himself smiling. He hadn't felt like that for a long time. It was an equally long time since he had felt confidence in himself. He looked up at the window. There was a steel grille on the inside covering the bars. His face set. To hell with them. He wouldn't plead guilty. Nor did he want bail. There were only his employers whom he could ask. He shook at the thought. No. Not that. It would be better to lie low—till it was all put right in court in the morning.

The plate over the peephole in the door moved. Andrews knew he was being watched. He didn't look up. Then sharp, unexpected, the familiar pain went through his chest and sweat came back to his hands. He doubled forward, muttering, 'Might have known it would play up with me. Hard stuff always did. Shouldn't have drunk so much—'

The door opened and a policeman came in. He stood looking down at Andrews.

'Not eating?'

Andrews didn't answer. He crouched pressing his chest. His face went grey and then blue-grey.

The policeman shuffled, uncertain. 'Come on now.' His white boy's face seemed out of place above the uniform.

'Could get you a doctor,' the policeman went on after a while. 'But believe me you'd better need him. There'll be trouble if he's brought in for nothing.'

'I'll be all right,' Andrews said.

'Don't want to let it get you down.' The policeman attempted a joke. 'We've had worse jokers than you in here.'

Andrews kept his head down.

'Better eat something. Come on now. What are you worrying about—your people?'

'They've gone out of town,' Andrews said. 'Thank goodness!' Then all in a rush as the thought came to him, 'Don't know about the fowls, though. They're just coming on to lay, and if they're not fed—'

He looked up and laughed, hot and uneasy. That was a foolish thing to have said.

'There's no one at home?'

'No.'

Later the door opened again and the young policeman threw Andrews' braces on to the bed. 'Come on,' he said. 'The sergeant says we can go and fix up those fowls of yours.'

The policeman brought Andrews' bicycle round from the back of the station. The pale detective came too, and as the three of them cycled through the town Andrews felt relieved that the policeman had changed into a sports jacket and hat. Only his trousers and boots, he thought, might give him away. He was shaking when they reached his house, but none of the neighbours appeared to be about.

He filled a dipper of wheat in the shed and took it down to the run. Then he said, 'If you can wait a minute I'll give them some green stuff too. I cleared it off the garden yesterday.'

The detective coughed and said nothing.

'Go ahead,' the policeman said and strolled around the garden. When they were leaving he said to Andrews, 'Wish I had my place in as good trim.'

'Saw your cigarette going,' Joe King said, stepping into the shed. 'Want the light on?'

'No, leave it a bit,' Andrews said.

'Best time of the day now, eh? Having a drink?'

'No!' Andrews shouted. Then, startled by his own violence, 'Well, not just now. Help yourself.'

Andrews could still see the police senior-sergeant, his broad neck spilling over his uniform collar as he stood to attention when the magistrate came into the court that morning.

There was only a young man as well as Andrews waiting in the small room off the back of the court. The young man walked up and down trying to comb his hair with his fingers. His name was called first and Andrews felt himself trembling as he watched him go up into the dock.

The young man was charged with deserting from a British merchant ship, and his lawyer explained that he had a good record of service in the Royal Navy during the war.

'What have you to say for yourself?' a slow heavy voice demanded. Andrews realized that it was the magistrate

(through the door he could see only one side of the court).

The young man looked startled. 'Got meself a good job,' he said leaning across the ledge on his elbows, 'and I'm settling in pretty well here. Can't think of nothing more to say.'

The policeman flicked his hand at him until he stood up straight.

The magistrate sounded weary when he finally spoke. 'Well, I can deal with you only in the manner the law provides. But such cases are occurring much too frequently. Young man, in these difficult times, especially, you should have a deeper sense of loyalty to your fellow seamen and to your country. One month's imprisonment with hard labour.'

'Stand down!' a policeman shouted.

Another name was called and Andrews was on his feet before he became aware that the name was not his. A lawyer was asking for an adjournment of a case as the young man came back into the room. He winked at Andrews, but his face was white. Keeping his head turned towards the policeman at the door he whispered, 'It's dead easy, chum. Do me month's hard, then I'm a bloody New Zealander, too.'

From the dock it was a moment or two before Andrews realized that the girl sitting with an older woman on one side of the court was one of the two girls who had left the dance-hall when he had. The woman, the girl's mother, gave evidence first. Her name was Mrs Earl. She said that she and her daughter lived alone, and that on Saturday night she heard her daughter come home at about eleven p.m. Shortly afterwards she was awakened by someone 'banging about' at the rear of the house. She got up and opened the door. There was a man standing on the back verandah. She screamed and the man went away. She immediately phoned for the police.

Answering a question from the police sergeant, she said that Andrews was the man she had seen on the verandah.

Wilson stood up. 'Mrs Earl,' he said, 'it was a very dark night on Saturday, wasn't it?'

'Well . . . I don't remember. It may have been.'

'You rather think it was?'

'Er—yes . . .'

'Then it was dark on the verandah?'

'Well—'

'Answer yes or no.'

'Yes.'

'Then how can you swear that this is the man you saw on your verandah on Saturday night?'

The woman looked bewildered for an instant. 'But I *could* see his face.' She turned and stared at Andrews. 'And I'll never forget the peculiar look he had. It made me feel, well, all funny inside—'

A policeman then described how he had been directed to the Earl's house and how he had found Andrews lying unconscious on the road a short distance away. He appeared to have fallen from his bicycle, he said, and he had been drinking. Searched at the police station, two articles of women's clothing were found in his pockets.

Two small garments were placed on a table and feet scraped at the back of the court as the spectators leaned forward.

The girl went up into the stand and identified the clothing as her own that had been discovered missing from a clothes line on the back verandah of her home. Other garments hanging there hadn't been touched.

Andrews' cheeks had gone stiff and he felt as if he were choking. He turned and looked at the magistrate, who wore pince-nez and had the soft square fresh face of a Sunday school teacher. He had asked questions from time to time in his surprisingly deep voice, but now as Wilson spoke he listened, his eyes turned up to the high ceiling, and made no further interruptions.

There were only four people sitting at the back of the court, Andrews noticed; three old men, the kind that hung around the public library rattling newspapers with dirty shaking hands, and a man wearing the Salvation Army uniform. One of the lawyers was whispering to the police sergeant. The girl and her mother were back at the side of the room.

Wilson's voice went on and Andrews tried to steady his jumping thoughts and follow what he was saying.

'. . . a daughter of his own twenty two years old . . . from a most respected family.' Wilson took a handkerchief out of his pocket and wiped his mouth. Then he bent his arm behind him, holding the back of his coat. 'He saw four years' service in the Great War . . . Gallipoli and the Western Front . . . gassed and wounded twice, and still suffers ill health as a result . . .'

The magistrate continued to stare at the ceiling after Wilson had sat down. Then his gaze came flitting down to Andrews. 'Now you tell me what you were doing on Saturday night.'

In quick nervous spurts Andrews told everything he could remember up until he left the dance hall. He said that everything was a blank after that. He discovered that he was leaning across the front of the dock. He straightened up quickly.

The magistrate opened the large ledger in front of him and began to write. A door rattled suddenly. Andrews jumped. One of the old men had gone out. The door continued to swing behind him. The reporter sitting at the long bench was busy drawing something on the corner of his pad.

Looking at the worn woodwork and the mould of dust on the windows, Andrews' misery grew. He wished he had taken more notice of Wilson's advice. His confidence had gone as soon as the girl's mother had given evidence. He kept thinking of what she had said about the look on his face.

Still writing the magistrate said, 'Aspects of this case are most unusual. In other circumstances I would not hesitate to punish severely. But after consideration of all the facts, I am taking the lenient view. Accused is convicted and discharged.'

He closed the ledger and looked across at Andrews. 'I've never favoured the suppression of names. But if accused has spoken the truth—and I believe he has—his actions were entirely unpremeditated. . . .' The tired gaze went back to the ceiling. '. . . his behaviour unconscious. I can think of no reason why his family should be made to suffer unnecessarily as a consequence. I am granting counsel's request for the suppression of his name.'

'It's all in darkness up front,' Joe King said. 'The family away?'

'Yes. Expect them back tonight.' Andrews switched on the light.

Rubbing his spectacles with a handkerchief, Joe King turned his pinched, weak eyes at Andrews. 'Don't look too good again, George,' he said, then, 'God, what have you done to your face? It's all bruised!'

Andrews looked away, appearing not to have heard. Fin-

ally he said, 'Fell off the bike.' Aware that Joe King was still looking at him expectantly, he said in a rush, 'Terrible thing happened to me, Joe.'

Barely managing to keep his voice from quivering, Andrews went on and poured out everything that he could remember happening after he had drunk the gin. His gaze moved from the floor to the walls and back to the floor, always avoiding Joe King, but his voice gradually became steadier; it was a relief not having to hold back.

'Good God!' Joe King said finally. He looked down at the forgotten spectacles and slowly began to rub the lenses again. 'Well I never!'

For a long time there was only the dry rattle and scrape of the branches against the roof.

'Whatever were the clothes you got down on?'

Heat streamed up Andrews' face, his jaw sagged. 'They were those little . . . er . . . panties, don't they call them?'

'What?' Joe King said. Suddenly he was laughing, tipping backwards and forwards slapping his hands on the box under him. He noticed Andrews' face and he stopped abruptly. Looking doubtfully at his empty glass he said, 'Just shows what drink will do!'

'Never did like spirits,' Andrews said.

'Well, it won't be in the papers.'

'No,' Andrews said. But in that instant, with a sick feeling of falling, he knew it would become known just the same. The woman and her daughter were certain to talk. The town was not as large as that; the story would spread. He pressed his hand to his shirt. The pain was moving deep in his chest again. His body seemed to shake under each heavy throb. He could never face the crowd at the bowling club again, that was certain. Already he could see the sly movement of curtains as he came down the street. 'That terrible man!' the women would say, and the girls would titter as he passed. Then the thought which he had tried to hold back: How long would it take to reach Emily and Judith? And all their friends! Whatever would they *think* of him? A hot prickling of shame descended on his head and shoulders. For a moment he was unable to restrain the muscles of his face.

Joe King replaced his glasses and directed his gaze sternly at the floor. 'Drink's a funny thing.' It was all he could think of to say.

Huddled in his corner, as if crushed there, rocking slightly, with the light moving on his smooth head, Andrews' mind couldn't cope with the enormity of it all. His thoughts kept jumping back to the past two days.

'What?' Andrews said, but his eyes were still inward, absorbed. 'Couldn't stand that detective,' he went on. 'The policemen were all right, though.' His voice and his eyes rapidly brightened, becoming almost cheerful. 'They're just ordinary blokes, you know.'

REVIEWS

BLOW, WIND OF FRUITFULNESS. James K. Baxter. *The Caxton Poets No. 2. The Caxton Press.* 6/-.

MR BAXTER writes like the true descendant of many poets; in this he has been equalled among New Zealanders only by R. A. K. Mason. If these poems are full of echoes, they are not the echoes of mimicry but the true, if altered, accents of other voices, inherited by right of a natural eloquence. Mr Baxter is, in fact, the most original of New Zealand poets now living: there is confirmation, not qualification, of that opinion in the recognitions that may be fetched up from the back of the reader's mind—images caught from Dylan Thomas or Edith Sitwell, a line with a melancholy roll that might be Arnold, a Byronic cadence and a phrase from Yeats in the *Letter to Noel Ginn II*. Yet there is as much choice as fate in a poet's ancestry. The *Letter* poem itself exhibits a welcome gain in irony and detachment, a more muscular growth in Mr Baxter's thought; one stanza displays his consciousness of powers, and of something else:

> No man can play Aladdin all his life.
> The oil is blood, although the flame be clear,
> And world-annihilating djinns appears
> Unasked-for at the falling of a leaf.
> Or else the heart becomes a cinder—Fear
> Is Art's companion, and the hermit Grief.

The quality, vigour, and variety of his invention display

also a restlessness, an impatience with the form or the theme, or both. The flame dazzles momentarily, sputters, then blazes again, like an arc lamp where the distance between the poles is imperfectly controlled. Possibly this flashing or intermittent quality is part of the poet's nature, yet it is a temptation to look forward to a change in which steadiness and intensity may be reconciled: it may come when Mr Baxter finds ways of reining more tightly his technical, imaginative, and recollective powers. Already those powers distinguish him; he has already added much to the beauty and range of expression in New Zealand verse, and proved that it can draw strength from within itself; but the shadow of a potential achievement is heavy on these poems, as Mr Baxter himself must be aware, as he must be also of the unsparing concentration on his subject which his own resources require of him.

Mr Baxter's greatest strength is still in poems which should live by the eloquence of a few lines, even a phrase: the poem itself serves as matrix, and though by no means of base material or lacking form, it shines by the intense light of the phrase or fragment, as *Let Time Be Still* by its superb first stanza:

> Let Time be still
> Who takes all things
> Face, feature, memory
> Under his blinding wings.

When Mr Baxter slips on a stanza form as neatly as a glove, his skill and ready invention often lose him his concentration. This is not true of his Robert Burns stanzas (*The Thistle*), which have their own special effect, being part of the dialectic of the poem; but it is noticeable in two poems (which are nevertheless enjoyable)—*Winter Morning*, and *Naseby Graveyard*. While his djinn controls him, I am prepared to believe that Mr Baxter can sound a trumpet note with any stanza; but in these two poems he has either, before ending, lost his concentration in the pleasure of verse, or has added a stanza or two after the djinn has departed. The poems are too good not to have been better; the reader may turn back, to rediscover the poet in rougher-hewn poems, in the passionately sketched Otago land or seascapes, the tragic glitter of phrase or cadence:

> So now I remember the bay, and the little spiders
> On driftwood, so poisonous and quick,

The carved cliffs and the great outcrying surf
With currents round the rocks and the birds rising.
A thousand times an hour is torn across
And burned for the sake of going on living.
But I remember the bay that never was
And stand like stone, and cannot turn away.

The technical powers and the control over subject come tantalisingly close in a few poems of more complex or stronger rhyme pattern. *The Antelopes* is an image-heavy dreamlike piece ('There in the ever-naked east remain The gentle antelopes, a race undying. . . .'). The last of its eight-line stanzas stirs animistic terrors and is stronger in this way than anything else Mr Baxter has written; it is splendid in itself, and the whole poem ought perhaps to be read, not as an isolated allegory, but with the actual landscape broodings of *The Track, Evening Ode, Tunnel Beach,* and *Haast Pass.*

The reading of the poems together leads to a necessary reflection upon the poet's subject matter. This should be very tentative, since Mr Baxter's discovery of his subject is in an early, though vital, stage; and in any case the process is endless while the poet continues to work. I have noted what I call a proof in these poems of the ability of New Zealand verse to draw strength from within itself. There can be no doubt that *The Track,* a poem with the movement and brightness of running water, has sources in Mr A. R. D. Fairburn's *Dominion* and *The Cave*; that in *Winter Morning* and *Let Time Be Still* something is inherited from Mr R. A. K. Mason. Poetry aside, there is corroboration of the thought about New Zealand pursued by Mr M. H. Holcroft in *The Waiting Hills* and elsewhere; there is acknowledgment, negatively expressed, of Mr Holcroft's meditation upon mountain and rain forest, in Mr Baxter's poem *Haast Pass*:

Return from here. We have nothing to learn
From the dank falling of fern spores
Or the pure glacier blaze that melts
Down mountains, flowing to the Tasman.

Among New Zealand poets immediately his elders there has been something like a common line of development. A mostly personal lyric impulse in the first place changed early in these poets to more or less direct lyric argument in which assertions about New Zealand itself, in one aspect or another, became a dominant theme. Poems like Mr Fairburn's

Dominion and Mr Brasch's *Forerunners* and Robin Hyde's *Journey from New Zealand* were representative. Miss Bethell's joyous landscapes are contiguous, though she knew what God inhabited them. Since then, the older poets still living and writing have been seeking a way back to more personal and universal themes, lest their discovery of New Zealand should end in isolation. Yet the discovery will have been worth while if there is the strength in those 'New Zealand' poems to leave for this country the first vestiges of a poetic tradition; if poets may now begin by crossing on a bridge the gulf which faced our imaginations even twenty years ago. The way in which certain conceptions of his country haunt the background of Mr Baxter's poetry, having receded from the positive foreground of older poets, encourages the belief that something of continuing effect was achieved by them: it is, of course, a shared achievement, which needed good poets for its beginning, as it has waited for a good poet to point towards a consummation.

Allen Curnow

DEMOCRACY IN THE DOMINIONS. A COMPARATIVE STUDY IN INSTITUTIONS. Alexander Brady. *University of Toronto Press. London: Cumberlege.* 21/-.

THIS BOOK fills an important gap in political literature; it is the first full-scale comparative study of government in the Dominions to appear since Viscount Bryce published his *Modern Democracies* in 1921. Other writers since Bryce have been content to embark on less ambitious projects, principally of three kinds: political studies of individual Dominions; general surveys of the development of responsible government and dominion status; and comparisons in terms of formal structure and constitutional law. Professor Brady has chosen a broader subject. He is interested in political life in its full-blooded entirety; and interested also in all the ways in which political development has been influenced by geographical and social causes.

Bryce included three Dominions (Canada, Australia and

New Zealand) as well as the United States, France and Switzerland. Professor Brady deals with the same three Dominions and also South Africa. The exclusion of Eire

> ' was determined, not by the question as to whether Ireland was a Dominion or whether she was even in the Commonwealth, but merely by the circumstance that in character she is different from the young nations which developed from colonies in the last century and whose people experienced the social transformations of settlement in new and often severe lands. The basic unity of this book dwells in its concern with a study of inheritance and environment in countries widely separated, colonized since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, and deeply influenced by the domestic vicissitudes of such colonization. The unity of the volume would have been impaired by the inclusion of Ireland.'

Had Professor Brady written after the establishment of the post-war Dominions the same reasoning would have led him to exclude them.

The field is one that must have tempted many political scientists. Its difficulty is obvious: a single investigator will find it virtually impossible to write with authority about all four Dominions. One or at most two he may know intimately; but not four. Comparative studies of the older countries are easier; so much work has already been done that satisfactory interpretations can be based on secondary sources. On the individual Dominions the meagre secondary sources are no substitute for personal knowledge. What they don't say about the social setting, the investigator can never know; and though he can consult official documents for supplementary facts, he can't always interpret them correctly. A symposium would be free from these dangers but would necessarily lack the uniformity of treatment that Professor Brady has been able to impose on his subject-matter.

He is a Canadian (Professor of Political Science at the University of Toronto), and says in his Preface that he visited Australia and South Africa in 1938. It may well be that his section on New Zealand, which is much the shortest, is also the worst. Certainly it bristles with errors, but they all happen to be trivial, and most of them are obvious ones that will deceive few New Zealand readers. A few might have been made by local scholars; e.g., that the Church of Scot-

land took the lead in settling the district of Otago (Professor Brady wrote before the appearance of the *Landfall* before last!). A few are natural slips; e.g., describing the election of (November) 1935 as having been held in the autumn of 1935. Again, the remote investigator is at the mercy of his sources, and Professor Brady perpetuates an error about the Public Trust Office that is contained in J. A. Lee's *Socialism in New Zealand*. But most of the errors can be attributed only to want of care in extracting material from sources; e.g., saying that during the depression public service wages were cut 'through the Arbitration Court'.

A more serious defect is the failure to notice some of the most important developments of recent years. The Internal Marketing Division is not mentioned. Though a whole page is devoted to the State Advances Corporation there is not a word on state housing. Different parts of the text seem to have been finally settled at different times. The results of the general election of November, 1946, are given, but so is a good deal of information that was rendered obsolete by legislation passed in 1945. Thus Professor Brady gives the old scheme of family allowances, recites the details of the social security registration fee, tells what happened to the Bank of New Zealand in 1894 but not what happened to it in 1945 and says that the Labour Government is firmly opposed to public corporations.

These are only superficial blemishes on a work that is otherwise excellent: well informed, easy to read and glowing with human understanding. Its purpose is the broad one of showing how British 'parliamentarism' has been moulded in the Dominions by 'diverse physical and social circumstances'. For each Dominion the 'physical and social circumstances' surveyed cover a wide range, but they are judiciously selected. Essential unity is preserved, though on a broad canvas. Professor Brady originally 'planned a work of somewhat larger dimensions, but . . . decided to publish first an introductory volume in modest compass which will survey the subject in its more general features'. The longer volume may prove to be an important contribution to political theory. Few political subjects are more fascinating than the influence of various physical and social factors on political development. Unfortunately speculation on the subject has not often been grounded on careful observation. Case-material of unrivalled promise is offered by the Dominions,

which started off with substantially identical political institutions and have moulded them to meet local conditions. It is to be hoped that in his longer volume Professor Brady will draw all the theoretical conclusions that are implicit in his comparisons.

The present book is unfortunately too short for its subject. In 439 pages Professor Brady can't treat any aspect of his subject fully. He has embarked on a broader social enquiry than Bryce, and written a shorter section on each country. Few New Zealand readers will find anything about New Zealand that is new to them. In all four sections Professor Brady has gathered together the threads (and has done it well), but he has not woven them into an original creation. He has assembled his material; but for his original contribution we must await his longer volume. Even his short introductory and concluding sections are summaries rather than an excursus.

That is not to say that the shorter book is unimportant. Though it has not attained the potentialities of a full comparative study, it does provide within a single volume a readable account of the political development of three sister-Dominions about which we New Zealanders are deplorably ignorant. The time is overdue for most of us to switch some of our attention from Europe to our neighbour Australia, and for us to equip ourselves to observe intelligently the forces that are tending to bring Canada within the orbit of the United States and are tending to draw South Africa out of the Commonwealth. Here is a Guide to the Dominions in One Volume. Professor Brady's major purpose was not to introduce the members of the Commonwealth to one another, but he has produced a book that serves that purpose admirably.

K. J. Scott

THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY. Henry James. *The World's Classics. Geoffrey Cumberlege: Oxford University Press.* 7/-.

IT ALL DATES, I suppose, from the early thirties when Stephen Spender wrote *The Destructive Element* and began a new phase of interest in Henry James. For Mr Spender, the destructive element was securely iced over, and he skated with deceptive ease up and over and around. It was just like one of those charming pictures by R. W. Macbeth, *Winter in the Fen Country,* which we used to pore over in old copies of *The Graphic.* Mr Spender did figures-of-eight, took the dangerous edge, and glided backwards with the greatest address; in fact he did everything except immerse himself, which was nevertheless the advice to be drawn from the quotation that gave the title to his book. 'In the destructive element immerse', (a sentence to make us cry 'Ruat Polonia!'), was the sage advice of Ford Madox Hueffer's apprentice Kurzeniowski. Later exploits on the destructive element have rather cut up the surface; in fact it looks more like Much-Binding-on-the-Marsh at the moment, and the gulfs below, especially the great Jamesian trough, are full of sciolists and struggling projectors on the way down.

The latest batch may be studied in recent numbers of the Cambridge *Scrutiny.* Now *Scrutiny* may best be described as exquisite: its writers practise an allusiveness that puts one in mind of watered satin. The muse of the scrutineers is a comely wench; she has moreover a charming pair of cross eyes to please the amateur; and at her behest her votaries have been pursuing Mr James with butterfly-nets, with fowling-pieces, even with the camera's eye. And as one turns the scrupulously printed pages, one realizes that after all it is but a trap to catch a dream.

What was the truth about James? I confess I do not know. I do not know what he meant when he murmured those extraordinary words about the figure in the carpet; but I shall give my private opinion for what it may be worth with all the allusiveness the subject demands. It is now long since that M. François Coppée wrote a polished stanza in which he carefully described our modern paragon Rimbaud as *fumiste réussi.* Coppée may or may not have been jealous of the Charleville playboy, but his chiselled phrase must ring chimes in any mind capable of even moderate scepticism.

Like his own Madame Merle, James was undeniably overfond of mystery, and after he became the Sage of Rye and, as it were, Baron and Warden of the Cinque Ports, he was often unduly serious when he began dictating and stepped into that world of prismatic light where no impression ever dies into nothingness, but dances on and on in the unending rite of spring. On the surface it would appear that he was anxiously intent on communicating an impression of great importance but of tenuous fibre. However, on reflecting, one is compelled to ask oneself whether the dear old gentleman was not rather talking to himself, per se ac propter seipsum. To be sure his prose-style soon became useless for knocking out a squirrel's eye at twenty yards: its endless whorls in the end tended to become flossy, and readers of *The Ambassadors* will remember how talented Strethers was at engineering postponements: 'he had only to get afresh into the rhythm of one to feel its fine attraction.' At the time of his death few readers still had the patience to accommodate their pace to his; he was ceasing to signify except for some remaining aesthetic clairvoyants listening in on short wave from China to Peru.

'Chord—very softly sounded—echoing on;
Touched by what hand, who knows—for what rapt ear—
In this rayed moon of memories past and gone?'

Nevertheless it would be unfair to James not to admit that in his later works, of the mandarin period so called, everything has been reinterpreted, and if all the natural lines of cleavage have been erased and replaced by moral and aesthetic criteria, these are of finished refinement. James had become the most cultivated of living savants, combing out philosophic tangles with unfailing patience and concern. Whether he remained a novelist is, of course, a matter of opinion. He described his own attitude at that time as 'an immense sensibility, a kind of huge spider-web of the finest silken threads suspended in the chamber of consciousness, and catching every airborne particle in its tissue.'

But leaving aside all these questions of aims and ends, how he could write! 'Eia! quam doctas habet ille manus!' I shall quote from three volumes a figure which apparently haunted him, and which by the time he had finished with it had acquired the most gorgeous of overtones. First, from vol. 2 of the 1883 edition of *The American*. 'She is extremely perfect; she is as hard and clear-cut as some little

figure of a sea-nymph in an antique intaglio, and I will warrant that she has not a grain more of sentiment than if she were scooped out of a big amethyst.' Next, from p. 247 of *The Portrait*. 'He suggested, fine gold coin as he was, no stamp nor emblem of the common mintage that provides for general circulation; he was the elegant complicated medal struck off for a special occasion.'

Compare with those early efforts this morceau pour la bonne bouche from the much later *Ambassadors*. 'Her head extremely fair and exquisitely festal was like a happy fancy, a notion of the antique, on an old, precious medal, some silver coin of the Renaissance . . . a goddess still partly engaged in a morning cloud or a sea-nymph waist high in the summer surge.'

Doubtless it was some such passage Sir Edmund Gosse had in mind when he wrote in a memorable essay, 'Out of chiaroscuro there leap suddenly to our vision a sumptuous head and throat, a handful of roses, the glitter of a satin sleeve.'

The volume with which the Oxford University Press has introduced James to its World's Classics series first appeared in the early eighties. It is a desperately serious story, and one misses in it the superb atmospherics which invest, say, *The Golden Bowl* with so pensive and elegiac a beauty.

Indeed there is a gauntness about *The Portrait of a Lady*, and James's endeavour in his preface to impose a patina of Venetian light and colour over the circumstances of its composition is not successful. James himself loved this book. Like Osmond, he often spoke of it 'deliberately, reasonably, still with his head on one side, as if he were looking at a basket of flowers', precisely the pose of the portrait of him by Sargent reproduced on the wrapper of this edition. But a later reader closes the volume with the melancholy sentiment of another great American in his mind, 'The stream of animal life leaves behind a little sediment of knowledge, the sand of that auriferous river; a few grains of experience remain to mark the path travelled by the flood.'

Charles Spear

CORRESPONDENCE

To the editor of LANDFALL

Dear Sir: I cannot help feeling that Mr Bertram, in his review of William Hart-Smith's *Christopher Columbus* (*Landfall* 6), has made the same mistake in interpretation as those who regard *Crime and Punishment* simply as a thriller, or *Moby Dick* as a sea story and nothing more.

I think one gets a hint of Mr Hart-Smith's attitude to the story of Christopher Columbus, when, in a quite other connection, he writes:

> 'I think it possible that mother
> nature dreams in favourite images.
> Thus one thing likes to represent another.'
> (*Autumn, Port Hills. Landfall* 6.)

For Mr Hart-Smith might be said to think in 'favourite images', and see in the world constantly, this representation of one thing by another. Like others whose minds have worked similarly (such as Melville, Dostoievsky and Kafka, to mention some of the more notable), he has built a microcosm—a universe of discourse—which is at once simplified (those things irrelevant to his metaphysical preoccupations are removed) and yet provides a very rich language in which to embody his ideas. Such is the world of *Christopher Columbus*. I think that Mr Hart-Smith finds in this world (representing the larger) something of the ambiguity which tortured Melville, and which he expressed in *Moby Dick*. Mr Hart-Smith gives it most explicit expression in *Sargasso Weed and a Crab*.

Yours faithfully,

Mary Prior

New Contributors

MARGARET GARLAND. Born in England 1903 and studied at the Slade. Lectured in sculpture at the Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Capetown. Came to N.Z. last year.

G. R. GILBERT has published stories in N.Z., Australia, England and U.S.A. After 4½ years in the R.N.Z.A.F. and one year with the Broadcasting Service is now living at Tiri Tiri Lighthouse. Aged 31, married with two children.

J. R. HERVEY. Born 1889 in Invercargill. Anglican Priest, retired owing to ill-health, now living in Christchurch. Author of *Selected Poems* (1940), *New Poems* (1942), and in the Caxton Poets Series *Men on a Raft* (all Caxton Press).

ALAN MULGAN. Born at Katikati 1881. For some years Literary Editor of the *Auckland Star,* and Lecturer in Journalism at Auckland University College 1924-35. Supervisor of Talks in the N.Z. Broadcasting Service 1935-46. Received the O.B.E. in 1947. His books include *Home: a Colonial's Adventure; Spur of Morning,* a novel; *The City of the Strait,* the centennial history of Wellington; and three volumes of verse, *The English of the Line, Golden Wedding,* and *Aldebaran.*

THOMAS O'BRIEN. Born of obscure parentage in the age of reason. Awarded the S.S. (Shuddering Shamrock) for gallantry in action against the Philistines. Wounded several times by Yahoos during a prolonged guerilla campaign. Still nursing his sores.

R. N. O'REILLY. Born in Wellington 1914. After several years in the Customs Department, some part-time lecturing in philosophy at Otago University, and a year at the Library School, transferred to the National Library Service and is now on loan to the Lower Hutt Municipal Library.

K. J. SCOTT. Born in Lincoln, Canterbury, 1912. Has been law clerk and public servant. Senior lecturer in Political Science at Victoria University College.

P. J. WILSON. Born at Lower Hutt 1922. After a brief period of teaching interrupted by war service joined the staff of *The Listener* in Wellington. Stories and verse by him have appeared in *Book* and other publications.

F. L. W. WOOD. Born in Australia, studied in Sydney and Oxford. Professor of History, Victoria University College. Author of *New Zealand in the World* (Centennial Series), *This New Zealand,* and other books.

NOTES

1

This number contains two special features, a collection of work by six of the younger poets, and a group of contributions about Ursula Bethell.

So few of the poets under thirty have been able to publish their work in book form that it is almost impossible to get a clear picture of what any one of them is writing, let alone of their work collectively. To enable readers to form some idea of it, six of them were invited to contribute to what is in effect a miniature anthology. Each was asked to choose about half a dozen pieces (fewer in the case of long ones) of what he (or she) considered his best recent unpublished work.

The resulting collection may be defective in failing to represent poets whose work has not come this way. It is certainly not fully representative of the poets under thirty in that it excludes Hubert Witheford (whose long delayed first book seems at last about to appear) and James K. Baxter. But it makes plain for the first time the existence of a whole generation of poets to succeed those represented in Allen Curnow's *Book of New Zealand Verse, 1923-1945*.

Until about 1930, while there had been individual poets and prose-writers in this country, there had been no continuous tradition of writing. The beginning of such a tradition may be dated from the publication of *Phoenix* at Auckland University College in 1932. That periodical, which lasted for four numbers, brought to light most of the writers who have been prominent in the last fifteen years. They have been called a group, but in fact they had little in common except the general longing for a better world which possessed the uneasy thirties, and their eagerness (perhaps a special form of this longing) to see the beginnings of a New Zealand literature, as distinct from isolated New Zealand books.

We can see now, looking back on their work, that it forms the beginnings which they looked for. Through it, through the recognition which it slowly won, they established the status of the imaginative writer, socially, as an acknowledged member of our community—though not his economic status.

Whatever the difficulties of New Zealand writers in the

future, there is now in existence a small body of work for them to look back to, to serve as a starting point or a point from which to break away. The past is no longer an intolerable paralysing void. They can turn in the wilderness of experience to one modest oasis of order, the first green shoots of a native tradition. It has been clear for some time that that tradition is being carried on and developed in the work of certain younger prose-writers; the poems printed here, together with the published work of the two poets mentioned above, leave no doubt that it is being carried on in poetry too, by several diverse talents.

2

To coincide with the appearance of her *Collected Poems,* a few of Ursula Bethell's friends were asked to set down for publication here some personal memories of her, in order that something might remain on record of a woman who exerted a remarkably wide influence in spite of her retiring life. To these have been added Mr Woollaston's portrait and Mr Dowling's poem; a specimen of her beautiful eloquent hand-writing may be seen in the *Collected Poems.*

These combine to form a picture which appears fittingly in the pages of *Landfall,* because Ursula Bethell took a keen interest in the long-discussed project for the establishment of this journal, and because her friends included a number of its contributors besides those who have written about her here.

What these memories cannot tell is the range of her friendships. She counted among her friends musicians, writers, painters, clergy, students, former employees, boys of the clubs which she had run in Christchurch and the East End of London, farmers, gardeners, carpenters, teachers, explorers, journalists, pacifists and soldiers, men and women of every political and religious creed and of none. And friendship was to her no casual matter: it meant involvement, responsibility, a heavy correspondence. The Rev. Merlin Davies, who knew her intimately at the end of her life, remarked on her ' nice sense of the degree of intimacy proper to each relationship.' To many she became more than a friend, a kind of pastor and counsellor, unique in New Zealand; many too sought her advice, unmarried though she was, in marriage and family problems—about which she could sometimes be disconcertingly frank. And it was as much with a view to helping her friends as for her own use

that her really catholic library was built up (Mr Davies commented that she had the best theological library he had seen in New Zealand). It is perhaps less a tribute to her than a criticism of our society that one of her younger friends, a university student, wrote that she was the first highly educated person he had met who took Christianity seriously.

She drew friends to her everywhere—and she longed for the most intense personal relationships—because, as one of them put it, 'there is spring about you'. With this keen sense of life went an inner intensity which is suggested in Mr Woollaston's portrait. As an artist and as a friend (and not as these alone) she lived richly, to the utmost of her powers.

3

In *The Listener* for September 3 Mr A. R. D. Fairburn made a plea for the establishment in New Zealand of a National Trust on the lines of the English body of that name. Such a Trust could preserve for our permanent enjoyment land and buildings and other works, whether beautiful in themselves or of interest for historical or other reasons, which are or may be threatened with defacement or destruction.

The preservation of the beauty and the history of our country is more than a matter of aesthetic or antiquarian interest, it concerns our pride, our self-respect, our consciousness as a people. It is in such natural and human creations that a great part of our history lies; and our history is our identity. When we destroy our past, or let it slip from us, we threaten that identity—it is as though we were pulling up our own roots. And that is a form of national suicide.

Mr Fairburn mentioned a few notable Auckland landmarks which are threatened, among them the Bank of New Zealand building. It is not always easy to decide how and even what to preserve. We do not want New Zealand to become a museum; yet we should find little pleasure living in a country from which all the past had been swept away, the good with the bad, in the supposed interests of business or economy or town-planning. Certain lands and buildings may claim to be preserved irrespective of their present use, if any—for instance the Waipoua Forest, the Maori church at Otaki, the old Mount Street cemetery in Wellington, Queenstown Park. Others, it may be, should be preserved

if some good use can be found for them. There is a case too for maintaining certain old towns of particular interest and charm as nearly as possible in their present state, where this will not prejudice their future: Queenstown is a good example, though it has recently been disfigured by one disgraceful building designed without regard for its setting, a branch of the Bank of New Zealand. Those who are so anxious to make New Zealand a country fit for tourists (and who appear so innocently to equate the country's good with the volume of American dollars it can attract) might reflect that among the objects of interest to tourists are those which preserve a people's history and express its character.

Mr Fairburn also mentioned some works of a rather different kind, the Maori (or Polynesian) drawings on the walls of rock-shelters, which, as is now known, are to be found throughout the South Island. In 1917 the officer in charge of the Canterbury Land District recommended to the Under-Secretary of Lands that these rock-shelters be preserved from destruction, and his report contains an admirable statement of the case for their preservation (see W. H. Skinner, *Reminiscences of a Taranaki Surveyor*, New Plymouth, 1946). Problems arising out of the first world war prevented the adoption of the report, but the Department of Internal Affairs has attempted to protect some of the drawings and has begun the recording of them, and it is to be hoped that it will continue its good offices. But as Mr Fairburn emphasized, a much more thorough effort of preservation is needed, which probably only such a body as a National Trust could organize. A few of the drawings are easily accessible, well-known, and horribly mutilated—and are still being mutilated. The protection and, equally essential, the full recording of these exposed and fragile works should be undertaken soon.

It can no longer be pretended that they are mere doodles, curiosities of no value. They are of unique historical interest; many of them are also works of art which could only have been created by draughtsmen of great and practised powers. Being among the earliest human creations in New Zealand, an irreplaceable part of its past, they deserve as much care as the work of Maori art in our museums.

POEMS

RUTH DALLAS

THE BOY ON THE ROCK

Returning, after the wind, and sea that had boomed
And roared among great rocks, their laughter seemed
Further than cries of gulls. Gleaming flesh
Of weeds like arms had rolled behind the rush
And dazzle of waves, the flying feathers of spray.
He had watched the waves, feeling the lift and sway
The leap on the rocks the gathering in again,
Gladly at first. But now that he had seen
The crouching shape of the sea, its monstrous back
Arching above him, and pale on the dark of rock
His body small and deserted as a shell,
How to escape the strangeness? Cold as a bell
Ringing over the water the voice that had called
Him back; and even returning the distance and cold
Remained. How frail, and different, their faces,
How thin and strange the sound of human voices.

ENTERING BEECH FOREST

So much has happened here in root and sap
The space between the veins of hands and leaves
Has widened; trees from childhood only hinder.

To have been born among them, to have known
No other trees perhaps; coming with blossoms
Breaking from your fingers it is not easy.

Blood remembering blossom and autumn leaves
Seems afraid of this enchanted spring,
These luminous caves of moss and floating sunlight.

Listening, loving perhaps, but O the sound
Up there in the branches heedless as mountain water,
And then the silence that waits for you to go.

All they have endured seems changed to strength,
Simplicity, to have gone to perfect the leaf—
We have forgotten something, or come too soon.

GROWING PAINS

When you listened with the rabbit, widely
In hump-backed paddocks, when you were the starling
That sang to himself on the wires and laughed with his wings,
When daisies drooped in your hands and you were sorry,
Men working far away on roads and hillsides
Seemed smaller under the sun than little creeping
Caterpillars under the ragwort flowers.

But all this had to be unlearnt, and quickly,
Rabbits and daisies and ragwort, nearly all
You had cherished were enemies; even the bird,
To some, that bird you found in the trap set under
The golden honey-bearing gooseberry trees.
You ate the lamb that leapt in the paddock in spring,
And man became the giant the rabbit feared.

A hard thing, hard and rough as the bark of a tree,
Grew round your heart and the heart of every man,
Enclosed you within yourself; to listen widely
And fearfully as the rabbit was to hear
All night the heart-beat of the frightened bird,
Or near and terrible the roaring pain
Of a cow that called her calf, her puzzled pausing.

Enclosed you until you saw that dog, half-blind
And slow with age, fed and sheltered still,
Free to lie in the sun or the shade as he pleased,
And half-wild three-legged cats that came to the cowshed
Given a bowl of milk. That day the bark
Put forth green leaves, and you began again
To see man distantly; but differently.

BIRD AND FLOWER

Under enormous skies, the hills far off,
Waking at dawn to find the tide had covered
The mud, the crabs, made islands of the reeds,
The boats afloat again, it was easier then
To put aside the broken and believe
There was only the singing bird, the opening flower.

At times, hearing the trees cry out in the wind
When clouds were witches flying across the moon,
The old deaf woman who lived alone looked in
At the window, the lame boy limped along the wall;
And remember finding under the pines that dog
Chained without water; but dawn put the night aside.

Put aside the long and slender bones
Uncovered by the wind where hills of sand
Were bright and clean as snow, put aside
The scattered oven-stones, the dead bird lying
Damp and ruffled on the diamond sand
Among the beads and delicate orange fans.

It was easier then, now the singing bird
Must bring the dumb before his singing wakes
The deep of wonder, now it is the flower
Unfolding above the fallen flower that speaks,
And putting aside the broken puts aside
Healing also in the time of pain.

THE LAND

On that dark day why did the river glide
So slowly, quietly, and every blade
Of grass and every separate pebble seem
So near and sharp; why did the water gleam
And glint and mock the sun; there should have been
On that dark day no river and no sun.

The willows without their leaves, how lightly they raised
Their unburdened branches, how gladly. And O the amazed
Almost incredulous feeling that came when the lark
Rose up from the harvested field and splintered the dark
Of the heart's dark day with his singing. Then, the land's
People returning, their eyes and their quiet hands.

This was the unexpected setting, the wrong
Landscape, there should have been no lark, no song,
The hills repeating dark on dark—O pain
Of softening blue. Where now were the lean
And twisted shapes of burned and blackened trees;
Why sun and bird-song, quiet hands and eyes?

But this is no land for brooding, for darkness, hills
And sun break in on you, the burned tree falls,
And tender the green of the pasture. This the man
Milking at daybreak knew, and the woman alone
In the farmhouse, long ago, or why did they
Return, seem near as the river on that dark day.

THE WAVE TO COME

Leaning on wind from the sea, not only the sand
Smoking across the beach to moulded sandhills,
The pattern of wind among the flowering grasses,
But everything is moving, is being reshaped,
Remoulded, changed, as if Nature were striving still
Towards perfection, towards a greater beauty.

The beauty that rises like the tide to wash
The fallen bird from the beach, seems larger here
Than pain or death. Strange, to ask why men,
And birds that love the wind, grow still as stones,
While there are children, nests in rocks and trees,
While wave still follows wave, the seed the flower.

I shall be content with the watermarks on the sand
The experimental shapes and colours of shells,
The shapes of trees, the time-worn rocks and hills;
With all things carefully moulded, patterned, or planned,
And the rhythmical cycles of plants and seasons and lives
That come and go like the tides, as slowly, as surely.

Ask no further question, listen to waves
Breaking on sand content with their motion and sound
Until I am cleansed of all desire to know
The meaning of life and death, it is still too soon.
Listen to waves on sand until my silence
Is like the listening shell that hears as well
As the voice of the vanished wave, the wave to come.

LOUIS JOHNSON

PYGMALION

With love he shaped the limbs, her breasts arose
Out of his heart, fastened upon the eye
And brushed his mouth, cupiditous and wild
With supplications that the chill would pass
From stone-cold flesh—that she would glow with life.

And her eye flushed, and breath distilled her throat
Where blood leapt cataracts, finding her voice,
Answering him, making his labour seem
All-wise and beautiful as they lay down
To wreak their love upon each others' bones.

But, in the brassy morning, when his eye
Found the first trace of ravage in her mould,
He knew that she would age and waste away,
The breasts sag, and the joints grow gaunt and rust—
And wished that she again were faultless stone.

POEM

(*For Pat*)

She seemed a poem read against the sky
In syllables of wind and vagrant hair,
And I, translating the dear lineaments
Was as a rock struck there

Deeply in ageless silence. And the wings
Her words were settled on my face,
Their little dreaming shadows and desires
Made sanctuary the place

Where even in the heart of rock blood surged
Sensing the pattern in the soul of time,
Words were in silence, and in silence, love
That made the poem mine.

SONG FOR A LADY

Very real, my fingers and thumbs,
The book that droops on the deadened floor
In the copious dust.
The mellow dusk
Leans in the window of a passive heart.

If I resist, if I exert
And make a gesture that transcends inertia,
The world will crumble at my able feet,
The night adore the passages I tread.

But there is dread, my finger and thumb
Are dogeared in the dark;
My heart will lean diseased into the light
But never rise or sing.

DIRGE

We built our love up like a work of art,
Increasing and subtracting as we came
First through the birth-world of redoubled Spring
And afterwards through shade.

But when the hell of the attendant smoke
Burst through the chemistry of you and I,
We were the victims of each others' hands
Not knowing how or why.

We consumed love at that first brief encounter,
And having nothing, on each other turned
With hands of hate to tear the other up
To see if love still burned.

ARTIST

He dreamed of spires and sudden miracles
Of brilliant portals breaking his black slum,
And all the sleeping night would burn awake
Knowing the passionate fever of his fancy.

The martyred saints of images he chose
Shone in the darkened twilight of his age,
And many saw the light that through him came
Lighting the air with flame, the earth with love.

They tell that he went down against the shame,
Having no other wish than what he knew
Before the light beguiled away his eyes
Leaving him blinded in infinity.

WALKING AMONGST MEN

A HUMBLE man with sunlight on his lips
Knows how to sing more readily than God
Who's but a hymn-receiver. Knows more love
Among the pollen of his orchard heart
Than pallid-worded grey theology
Whose light is black to darkness in the dark.

Visions more magic in a minute's soul
Than all the veins and tickings of a clock
Who's but a minute-marker and a slave
To all the subterfuge of its own day,
And sells its mystery into history
Whose words are shark and shallow, and like spray.

A humble man with hunger in his heart
Can tell a minute by a song he loves
And build his faith more wonderful than God
By all that he believes into such notes
That there are shadows in a symphony,
But light of heaven in his sonnet's throats.

Can, with his story, set the stories right
That we have swept and squandered, or not seen,
Or spent as ashes, called a vagrant dream.
This humble man with magic can make war
Upon the crosses of our ecstasy
Or create angels of the things we are.

THE GIANT SELF

Time has a giant eye which sees us small
Pecuniaries stumbling under guilt
Groping for magic with miasmic eyes
That shine for words whose truth will not be felt.

Who knows that all our troubling will be vain,
Black with the blood that conjures up our dreams,
Dispels the day, finding us each at night
Lonely and anxious, numbering the whims

That, fanciful, evade and prove the mind
No giant to fathom how the time or tide
Ran beautiful in our once magic veins
But was uncalled, and languished left, and died.

LINES FOR A MAIDEN LADY

Creating God from wisps and shreds of dreams
To whet the agonies of hope upon,
She carried heaven ever in her eye
And bore a look of summer in her strong
Star-gazing way, but every day
Woke with a breath of winter on her limbs.

How could she summon? what then would she do?
Constantly racked her, mocked her, led astray
Embroidered thoughts and fancies bought and spent
To ease the hour-long evenings, and the gay
Green aspirations found that touched and went
From Spring to Summer and the Autumn through.

She fashioned solely in the flesh's form
And knew no mind for him whose mystery
Was utterly in his being, like the psalms
She carried in a red-hide livery
And mouthed the shapes, or sought them with her arms
Finding that quite enough, and live, and warm.

ONE WOUNDED CRYING

I AM that woman who severs the night with a cry,
Whose heart breaks silence into anguished parts,
Whose love was lynched at dusk upon the hill,
Who may not lift her eyes for heaviness.

The man who murdered, and whose day was done,
Caught off his guard among the warning thorns.
Though I be pierced with all their glassy knives
The death of me will not deliver love.

Though I be pent as a wind and then released
That my free blood hurdles me all obstacles,
My death will not deliver me these words
Dry as the cloth of all necessity.

Only, the heart will learn, that there is need
Beyond the furlongs of the syllable;
Light that seems darkness to the usual eye.
Oh let me, seeming fallow, be struck blind!

W. H. OLIVER

SLEEP WILL COME SINGLY

SLEEP will come singly and the night will blind
With unnumbered fountains every troubled eye
And whisper solitude to crowded minds.

Sleep will be despot of these darkened hours
And wilfully administer his peace,
Till, recognized in dreams, the world is drowned

In a ghostly horde of petals and dead leaves.
Then will the meek man have his blood revived,
Tall as an antelope walk the bright fields,

Speak with a flower in his tongue, and listen to men
With a bird in the cage of his ear; on the limbs
Of impossible trees climb to heaven again.

Sleep will leave morning amazed with power,
And speaking from the high inchoate night
Will tell each little world its character.

THE UNCREATED DARK

All else was made but the dark. In the original
Fore-part of time there was chaos and no light
Marrying waters. Earth, air and the stars,
The magical sun itself, were waiting their birth.

Then from God's kiss sped the arrows of morning,
And light split the darkness, turning the shapeless
Uncreated void to a pattern of forms,
And light, light fathered the habits of life.

But now at night the uncreated dark
Steps with a tentative tread over our hills,
And, making the mist its friend, to us returns
That early era, old before our time.

Never completely, not without some pale
Glance of obedience to the world of God,
It fills the city, makes the sea its own,
And panics through each widespread ear and eye.

NIGHT-WALKER ON THE EDGE

Night-walker on the edge of sleeping towns,
Step from awake to slumber as you cross
The shattered sky-line on the luminous
West of the city, where the houses cap
The mountain's contour with their private shape.

Let enter in your thread of daylight dreams
—Those rooves and gables, angles in the sky—
That perfect darkness where no star can stay
The former being of your world; dissolve
In ancient order every strong resolve.

Slow walker, when your steps have gone to rest,
And all your body's stress merged with the firm
Shape of the earth below you, night will yearn
Like a star's shadow to your dreaming breast,
And every essence be your minute's guest.

THE STAR AND THE FLOWER

The experience under earth that partly
Makes marble our stay as time's guest
Separates beast and flower from the pageant of heaven;
Yet this no less perfectly compounded essence
Is tied by frail cords to the higher eternal.

The star's light splashes the flower's cup;
And we who are equally present in brute and god
Gather our grief and our joy, these moments of love,
From the two sides of death, but are ever afraid
To mourn with the falling petal or star.

For experience under earth as one answer
Makes the language of gods a strange tongue.
Yet when these speak through the mouths of our being,
As the star and the bloom share a life, then our ways
On earth would be weddings, and childhoods rejoice.

ELEGY

And who will conform to her death—
The leaf in the earth or the meteor wasted by air?

One subtle method of death will be hers,
Whether the tissue rot, veins break, and stem soften,

Or whether the shell be stripped by the amazing air
And the substance spread through the sky, laughing.

She could contain this dying easily,
As the glow-worm is one with the hanging mosses and grass.

As a light makes a harbour of mist shapely, precise,
She could resolve these immaculate shades.

But still we remember her, on a spring morning,
Glad with profusion of grass, and the hills

That model formally a god's commandment;
Or with the straitened life of rock-pools—

Even the shore-rocks lived within her feet,
And, not more sculptured, in her brow, the headland.

There is a long echo that the sea brings back,
Tossing Americas on these narrow shelves,

But she seemed one with the world and all its ways,
The breadth and depth of the sea, and the earth's caverns.

Perhaps in that utter, unimagined heaven
The formal patterns of her life create,

And mating there will breed the thing she missed
Through all her exquisite happenings on earth:

A child of frost and flame, of star and flower,
With each fond absolute at his command.

And there, if she, her body no less fine,
Her mind precise and active, miracles

Each one, would bring this child to life,
Live in such radiance, no fear could break

Her now unsaddened movements, for all grace
In her abounding, from her well of hands
A flower would spring to meet the topmost star.

A HAND FALLS

Man with the pride of stallions would control
Eccentric forces ranged about his home;

The excellent death of flowers, the rotten bough
That suddenly drops and breaks the forest sleep,

The waves' arrest, retreat, and new attack,
The cliff that slips to damage under sea,

The whole wide system of impermanence—
This he expects to watch and go untouched.

Oh but a hand falls and the limp remains
Evidence the shattering of pride.

Grief breaks the window with the cries of pain
The gulls make, or the animal in death, or man,

Enters the empty crevices and fills
The balanced mind with a parable of loss,

Till the house is possessed, the women, the children and friends
Tell how their lives are reft, and their rank displaced.

And, in the frail beginning of another day
The heart of man will not recover peace.

KEITH SINCLAIR

WAITARA

I

1859

The Settler
We need a harbour where the breakers melt,
We need a door-way that our ships may leap
From the sides of the possessive land
Against the resistant bars of the great waves,

And fields without one black barbaric tree;
Meadows, and a harbour to the abjured past,
To build a people nearer to our needs
In the unbaked clay, the unconsecrated waste.

O nightful men, we come and are bearing gifts
For the fallen tribes, a nationality
More gracious than your counterfeited kings,
Or the five-fold unity of your long canoes.

The Chief
Leave us alone, for when you come
Among us we are nothing,
We have no voice any more.

The Settler
The missionary has come to town
To let the farmers in their wooden fort
Perceive that he is one with them,
The settlers who practise with revolvers.
The Governor feels that he is pledged,
And the land must be bought,
The instalment must be paid.

The instalment that time permits
Against isolation, on the unity
Snatched from the separate deaths
That the plains involve,
And the bush: where we are all alien,
All who are of man's alliance

We are no advocates for giving the Maoris
A higher price for land than they demand.

The real reward is our example,
And the keys to that other kingdom.

The Maoris are ripe for the fruit of Christ,
But Wiremu Kingi's a scoundrel, the minister said.

The Chief
Although you have floated the land
I will not let it go to sea,
Lest the sea-birds take flight
Since we have no resting place.

The Settler
The land must be opened with sufficient speed,
Sold at a sufficient price,
And the tribes given sufficient faith for salvation.
Where nothing is sufficient

2

1948

Little oasis in a green desert,
Why do all your people hide?
Is it from the seas of mud and fields?
Little street along the involuted river,
No more fearful than was the pa Te Hurirapa
In the bush clearing, where the river
Opened its mouth, and no more lonely.

The brethren of your exile
Shelter on the deep harbours,
Are derelict in the valleys,
Like those earlier encampments,
The fellows of the pa Te Hurirapa.

Your fellowship is a new fellowship,
And old like a hundred years.

But only the land looks new,
Polished and carved with your name.
Your confederation of hermits in the hills
And on the deep harbours is not new.
Yours is the same isolation the first tribes knew.

3

Is there a kowhai in the blood,
When all the trees are in the park, and dead?
Is there a planet in the heart
When no small love can filter to the moon?

There is a planet in the heart,
But the planets we believe in are unreal;
The real stars are the solid circling stones,
Whose motion is the register of death.

There is a kowhai in the blood,
Which knows no autumn where it thrives,
An image in the garden we design,
And live with our reality inside.

4

No people can possess a land,
Where every single sod and stone is strange,
An alien to the blood, who waits to oust
The bone-cells, in the crucible of earth.

We are all crucified in the earth,
The earth our cross, exotic to our hands,
We are all nailed by time's jest,
Who belong to the clayless climate of the mind.

Ache in our back, O cliff before our mind,
We cannot belong to you, nor share the peace
That lies upon you like an incubus,
For our loyalties are fathered in the mind.

THE CHRONICLE OF MEOLA CREEK

Not I, some child, born in a marvellous year,
Will learn the trick of standing upright here.

Allen Curnow

Yet many do live their lives here as natives.

T. H. Scott, *Landfall 6*

1

We both were five and we both were wild
With the summer-time hung on the mudflats that lay,
Each holiday morning, for the world of our play,
When I showed Ngaire the way to sea,
That black-haired bride of a child.

Our schooners sailed, a loving pair,
Down the channel that steered through the Sargasso Sea,
Past the corals, the cannibal isles, and the tree
With roots that fed in the sea-bed scrub
And leaves that sucked from the air.

The sea-grass snatched at our laden keels
As they scored their deep trails in the skin of the bay,
As we opened our hatches to spill our array
Of tribute paid by the lands we had sailed
To the Rock our wonder revealed.

We sang happy end to the ocean's track,
Sang hail to the Rock of the farthermost fame,
To the desperate Rock with the dangerous name
That called its sailors back.

We rejoiced at the end of the day-long play
That the worlds we created were dead as we left,
And the silence, unpeopled, awaited our breath
On the beach that we owned every day.

2

Alan and I were the marlin's fins
In the milk of our youth as we furrowed and flew,
While the salt came like curd in the wake our canoe
Had arrowed wide on the narrow tide,
And the sun was thick on our skins.

We hailed the bush on the hallowed hill
Where the Maoris surrounded the Volunteers' fort,
And the Rangers had died for the England they sought
In the fern they claimed for their sons to burn,
The silt they hungered to till.

We jumped the wall of each wave that bucked
Round the petulant turns of the lava-fed creek,
And we crossed the Pacific in less than a week.
We passed the teeth of the eel-like reef
To the Point where the garfish hooked.

We were glad in the myth that was breast to our mouth,
That was home, where our play was, with coastline and paddock,
We were *Tainui* and *Tory* that nosed down the hot
Declining latitudes towards the south.

Where they hoped for homes in the jaws of the pole
We raised our dreams on a point of loam,—
The statues of men who grew famous at home
When the south was a future and soul.

3

When we were the people our time had grown,
The poet, the artist, the prophet we meant,
We launched our youth in the flames of the men
And the mangroves, meeting along the creek,
The towns that our eyes had known.

We were brave, were mapping the coasts of mind
Where we strove to plant, in the soil of speech,
The truth that was born on a Rock, a Creek:
Our random home, grown native now,
Was the pith in life that our past assigned.

Our minds were making the shape of years.
Though our fathers had never been older than boys,
In a land where the flesh, without spirit, enjoyed
Eternal riches without growing rich,
We sailed future, older years.

As the dung in the earth and the rotting bark
Is the womb of the rose, so the grossness of flesh
That had swelled in the south, was the threshold
Of thinking eyes in the subliminal dark.

The Islands were named in that bright metastasis.
The renewed zeal and sun of September
Had marked them the next of the last, and a member
Of the cities of Athens and Cnossos.

They were harbour, were shelter, were shell,
While an orchid constricted its petals of frost
Round the red, red mainlands the migrants lost
When they followed the summer for dwelling.

Where they shifted their roofs and their speech
To the sun in the south, their dreams followed,—
And banned by the tides from the sorrows
Of continents—, rooted in bracken and beach.

Poems grew outward like love from the yolk
That embraced the whole of their living lives.
Their abstractions were native and wived
By the beauty their land bespoke.

The Islands were the bows of all ships,
But they called no sailors home, for no sons left
The cross of the south, that was weft
To the warp of the world's apocalypse.

KENDRICK SMITHYMAN

WHAT IS IT TO BE ORPHEUS?

WHAT is it to be Orpheus? It is
to contain in oneself the depth,
the hell depth, where softly one
foot only falls, to open the calm
deep, the sand quieted corridor
in light not light of that dark,
visible torment winding through

silence, there to start music out.
And the music a branch, a hand
put to the air and to strings of light
beyond the body within deeps of
self, depths of being where known
is by such depth to be known.

Platonic cave, illusion at mouth
savours the great nipples of the sky
once to discover Eurydice who walks
further within, within madness
of strings, light, hands, branches.
She rejects all, walking in facts
of her death like a coat, shrouded
in silence at the heart of music.
Called back again.
The sky draws
back rejecting finally the dream.
What is it, then, then each to be
his Orpheus, to each his Eurydice?

FOUR STANZAS

I

Beloved and mine whose singing
like lightning breaks apart my skies
importuning and entertaining
our temporal felicities,
from that bright centre where you move
with the child take your known word where
as star or a stranger you may enter
bearing the world of my love.

2

Is it death nightly howls long in the dark
when, bent from its tree, the apple drops?
O act of death, you wear the dark extreme of love
as the pale breath of flowers shakes, breaks
ripened and full and dropping
from the garden and the tree's furthest lips.

3
How cast beyond, twisted out of reach
of our speech lies the last white light
(like a night beyond all days) of all that
always too short we must say to soothe each
of us, each to assure.
As seamen once
held further south, testing the intricate
latitudes, led ever down by the myth of Beach,
we press comfortless with the dark by night
with gesture and word to lose, to reach that
ultimate, wordless, senseless sense of light.

4
O ACT of life birth death love now mine
between the singing garden and ever between
the dark extremes, the bright light of life
and the utter and deathly dark we celebrate
ritually in love, O girl woman and wife
caught frustrate on anguish
beyond touch or language
in silence or howling riot,
it is you whom I dedicate
daily the will and the lasting wit to suffer
our histories' indignity and what felicity
may swing on us, as above
all, through all moves like a slim wing our love.

POEM FOR A WINTER BIRTH

SHE locks the season
winterset on her gaze
now learning to be bare,
while passions from her eyes
disperse, upon their leaving
unclouded though her sighs
mingle nakedness trees wear.

Single now as not
hitherto being she lies
whom witness of union stirs.

From witnesses outside her gaze
returns discovering light,
darkness, movement, transparencies
of pain cleansing that clean air.

Innocence, knowledge,
she comes to through a wild
flesh-torn, pain struck hour,
who rides now in that mild
following calm as outrage
ebbs and she, holding her child,
locks all within her tower.

CONSIDERATIONS OF NORFOLK ISLANDS

1

High in the afternoon the dove
winds melancholy to his mate
a thread of music, monotone
upon the languid afternoon
the language of his simple love,
his phrases breaking through the heat.

Heraldic and primeval birds
reflect from their neglected tree
the clemency we did not know,
the charity we could not say,
who kept behind our uncouth words
a terrifying privacy.

Returned to memory they wind
now simply out note under note
our pain commingled with their song,
the pain of music that must hang
like heat stiff on the lazy wind
and stab our history to the heart.

2

CASCADE

Seas scuffle across the boulders.
There, curbed the landings by combers,
stand off and on or sail away

those small and consort vessels
beyond the curlew's sweep mourning
at return above the shipping wake.
Opening their wounds to salt flight
shake of spray, the unexcited cliffs
shoulder cloud, whose roots express
twisting the hands of supplication.

3

KINGSTON

Black reef off-shore, and balance arm,
a bay of shallows weighs against
further the grey curl of the pier.

Here by evenings young men swimming,
the cooling voices on the sand.
There, whale boats lunge below the slip.

Counter the poise of times and men.
Between the marsh and surf this ruin
grazed now by horses, bruised by wind.

The walls close silence round. No leap
upon the light continually flows
from gate and chapel out until that sea
shatters.
Balance of land and water,
thrown powers of evil and of origin,
the coasts of settlement and hurt
die daily down by weights of wind,
in weight of time are smoothed, die down
through wind spill, phrases, and the night
by that same ocean. Whence they came.

4

A knot of song, columbine fugue,
the trees design beyond the shore.
The surf upon these rocks decays,
a gale of finches rides that hill

as, with small sounds, the customs house
warms in the sun its broken stone.
A whale boat buckets from the reef.

That island further off the reef
smoulders with cloud, storm brightened hill
and barren refuge of our fugue
where, solitary, light decays
nor lifts above its graceless stone
the single witness of a house.
The islanders avoid its shore.

The gale pricks at this settled shore
nurtured in pain which yet the stone
declares as wind upon its hill.
Corruption's evidence, this house
looks sourly at the twisted reef,
the marsh flower endlessly decays.
Our wit is drawn within the fugue.

Sad knot of song, the doves' slow fugue
broods upon stone, breeds upon hill
the bloody and upbraided shore,
this ragged sun, this broken house.

5

HEADSTONE BAY

Noon falling from the needles. Below
surf beats cave and bay, its fathoms
coiling upon rock, withdrawing, shaking
spray upon wind. The pines assume
seawards a darkening glance from cliffs
wet as with rain in screens where blown
from tumbled hollow under the sea reaches.

Nothing here is out of the sea's reach,
least of all the century dead marked below
sallow stone, who swept in these fathoms
once, but drew away. The convict shaking
in terror's outrage lonely on these cliffs
saw freedom something harshly to him blown
and blown away. No freedom here assume.

6

Walk, boy, that soft ground softly.
The gallows' bone wears out beneath.
What rocks beyond the wind? Tree shade,
wind shadow; no pardoning grace may
offer these moaning levels under us,
who are late. Will the light forget?

But roaring summer down the gullies
now winds of sunrise seemly walk
before that strait, that greyish moan
bone bred in hummock. Ocean heave
slaking from morning trespass off
suffers the lime to entertain your eye.

Walk lightly, boy, you compass blood
coughing compassion from a smoke
above a line of wall, a lineament
trace grief against a sick design
or word the tale of settlement again
avowing passions we may not deny.

Confessional a hollow tree, a bird
rides spumy upsurge from those thighs
their cliffs contort from groins down.
Confessional the barrack walls about
chapel and office. Tree shadow, shade
of wind and wound afford your cry.

Whose wound finds kinsman touches us
and words inside an eye one world,
the solitary forever in his cell, hand
clenched around the apples of his pain:
design them, boy, the human and the lost
host kinsman of our islands and accord.

P. S. WILSON

TO A YOUNG GIRL, PERHAPS ABOUT FIFTEEN YEARS

On a fine day the pattern grows
And she'll be going now to bed,
But I am a thousand miles away
To say these verses o'er her head;
Nor has she need of verses, for
She would not care what has been said,
Yet all the colour of her smile
Would say, if these were smiles instead.

On a fine day the pattern grows
And she'll be going up the stairs,
But I am a thousand miles away
And cannot know what thoughts she shares
Nor who she shares them with; but soon
Some smile will find them unawares
And tell them what they mean, and where
They wander until day appears.

On a fine day the pattern grows
And I am a thousand miles away,
But, as the light goes out, who knows
What all the trees begin to say?
Perhaps the grey sky looks into
Her heart, as she goes past the moon;
Then what these verses could not do
By artifice, will still be done.

THE REWARD

I picked a white-grown flower
Whose name I've never known
Or never remembered,
That was in a high bush
Of pale leaves;
And as I bent the stem
That bent but would not break,

I even then prepared to leave it,
Cupping it in my hand
So I could see it clearly
And remember it for certain.
My friend said, 'Pick it,
Or leave it', and I tore the flower
Slowly from its setting;
And now it stands on my table,
In a full cup of water,
A constant source of joy
While I work, unbelievably,
Delicately white.
For three days it has lived;
And some of the young leaves
Have grown forth further.

CARD TABLE

Winter days are for feasting,
And when the blinds are drawn
And the drawing-room light makes just the difference
Allows us to keep it on,
And basins are there to catch the drips
From the upstairs porch and the windows that
We didn't get shut in time;
Then the wind blows hard across the bay
And the wet wood cracks in the fire,
And when we're in earnest, each facing each,
We can match our fortunes' power.

Time's then room for expending
Hours that are safe from harm,
Wit is the charm we work by,
Keeping the symbols warm,
And chance knows no revealing;
This is what's left of the planned,
Foreseen, tabled time outside
Before the wind had stormed
The worked-over tracks of a lifetime,
Disarrayed the channel, drawing up the sand
Below the sea, whipping white horses
Across the bay to the heaving land
And the great glass room where our fortunes stand.

And the fire bursts here in the heating air,
The disordered trees lean through the garden
And their wailing is borne away by the wind,
Till the time we come down, heavy hands quieten,
The storm is over, the sea goes back
From the wretched sand, all stretching away,
All flat, all smoothed; and to ask for pardon
There's not a soul we know, walking
By stranded, airless, sand-laden boats
Swept out of care, that had bumped in ever
More slowly, heaping, heeling over.

A NEW GROUP

To the great expectation of joy I offer
The care of the leaf, the pride of the morning
Flirting with power in the sun, and the luck
Of the freely trusting wind.
Embodied in waiting's stolen excitement
Each is meticulous, pride is no secret,
All is the perfect demand.

To the extreme anticipation of joy
I offer the blatant colours of the fool,
And the soft silk of his wishes.

MY NEW PICTURE

She won't say a word to me,
No, she won't answer—
The girl in the picture—
Degas' dancer.

She's bronze of course,
With strong wax arms,
And the long wax legs
That the dancer learns.

She's got her back to me
And she looks up high
And her hair's in plaits
And I wonder why

She won't say a word to me,
Just won't answer,
But pretty stands there,—
Degas' dancer.

THE MEMORIES

Those things that we can never complete,
Like the house at the far side of the bay,
There in the corner of my mind's eye,
That is for me a symbol forever
Remaining elusive,—are the moons,
Are the silver moons, for which we cried
When we were children.
And now when early evening
Passes by and dusk comes, and the shadows pass on,
And dusk is gone and the shadows turn to mist,
And the mist fades far and far away to the dim hills
Till suddenly night-colours fill the air
And the lights go on, illuminating a new world
—We have cried again, and at such moments
Will always cry.

BASIL DOWLING

EXTREME UNCTION

In Memoriam M.U.B.

That death might come too suddenly, she said,
Had been her dread;
As though full noon should break with no sweet warning
And hint of morning,
And no familiar bell through greyness chime
For matin time.

Ah well, she has her wish, so modest, small
And reasonable:
Her goods considered well and set in order
This side the border;
With tokens of white flowers and friends about
She will set out.

Now all is quietly disposed and ready
And her soul steady;
Strong Ocean-Master, Lord of living and dying,
With her hour nighing,
Prow heavenward, trim tackle, prayer availing,
Send her fair sailing.

URSULA BETHELL: SOME PERSONAL MEMORIES

H. C. D. SOMERSET

The garden poems of Ursula Bethell were written at odd times during those quiet years of her life, between 1924 and 1934, when she was living at Rise Cottage on Cashmere Hills, Christchurch. She used to distribute them in manuscript among a fairly large circle of friends as a kind of poetic chronicle of her work in the garden to which she was devoted.

I had known Ursula Bethell for some years. She had become interested in an attempt I was making to work out a scheme of education related to the life of the land. A member of a pioneering family, she had spent her early years in North Canterbury and so had a keen interest in rural problems. She wanted to see people really *established* on the land—'"*Established*" is a good word, much used in garden books', as she said in her poem *Time*—with all the resources of science at their disposal, but equally with the resources of European culture, with music and the drama, with pictures and poetry, with a deeper sense of religion.

How was it possible, she wondered, for youth to get time for all these in a world that had increased so much its speed of living? That was the problem. Her own life had been so different; she had spent many of her early years in the quiet ecclesiastical atmosphere of an English cathedral town; she had read and travelled widely. Later she had spent years in church work and welfare work in London, particularly in young people's clubs. It was consequently a great joy to her to keep in touch with educational and social work among youth and adults in and around Christchurch.

And so the old Essex car with the big square bonnet and Miss Effie Pollen at the wheel was often turned towards Oxford in North Canterbury where we were then living. Her coming always initiated long discussions on the best ways of enhancing the life of the community through some cultural channel. She wanted to hear of local work in gardening and agriculture; this would touch off her own enthusiasm for gardening and in particular for the garden she was creating on Cashmere Hills. And then, gardening disposed of, she would open her large handbag and produce letters from England, clippings from *The Times*' supplements, snippets from newspapers of all sorts, cartoons by Low, book reviews, pamphlets, books everyone ought to read. She was always full of news of what people were doing, especially the 'young things'. She seemed to know everyone and to be helping in a dozen places where a little encouragement might be of use.

It was a time of great optimism, the time of the Weimar Republic, of the League of Nations, of the revival of drama and poetry. Letters from England told of the new enthusiasm that was abroad in religion, in adult education, in the Little Theatres. She welcomed all these signs of the re-

habilitation of mankind, but her keen critical sense prevented her from being carried away. She knew Europe too well.

It was in poetry that she was most keenly aware of a false note. The artificial quality of the post-war lyrical revival disturbed her; like W. B. Yeats she was disturbed by the ' vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi* '. Her sense of the fitness of poetry warned her that it was not accurately tuned. More and more she returned to her literary favourites, to Donne and Traherne and Wordsworth; she read and talked of Francis Thompson, Alice Meynell and Gerard Manley Hopkins, so lately released by Robert Bridges; T. S. Eliot claimed her attention. The theme that attracted her was that of a poetry rising once again from simple situations. She recognized, however, that the old *forms* would not do; neither would *vers libre*. The form must be tense; it must have nerve and sinew; yet there must be freedom—no dependence upon rhyme or any other artificial device. Rhyme, she considered, should be used sparingly to give here and there a little added colour and warmth. Her attitude is well illustrated in the first verse of her poem *Alpines*.

> Away with you, plausible rhymes, that come to me unbidden;
> I listen for little sounds that are shy and hidden:
> Away to the poets' pastures, all too mettlesome steeds;
> Halting, pausing footsteps suffice for my needs.

Rise Cottage was a blessed haven where she had time for the major interests of her life, gardening, reading, writing and meditation. It was situated high on the hills at the far edge of the settlement, near enough to the tussock land for the rabbits to come down and ' eye her lettuces '. It had a fine view of the plains reaching away to the Southern Alps on the one hand, and to the sea on the other; there was a nearby view of the ever-present, kindly Port Hills. In the ten years she lived there, from 1924 to 1934, she transformed the hard clay of the sloping ground into the garden that formed the subject of her first book of poems.

I have many memories of her in her garden and of the conducted tours around the borders and rockeries, the orchard and the vegetable patch. It was a delight to see her joy over one long-sinning saxifrage that had at last sent up a tiny flower. And how she loved to name her high-sounding shrubs.

Come, let me read this catalogue of shrubs,
And choose out those with lovely-sounding names.

'They sound so robust,' she would say. How she loved robustness, she who was so delicately built!

Ursula Bethell shared Rise Cottage with her friend Effie Pollen, the 'little Raven' of the Garden book.

The two women were very different in appearance and outlook, Miss Bethell tall and slight with patient, sensitive, almost austere features; Miss Pollen full of nimble warmth with rosy cheeks and jet black hair. Both had a fine sense of humour. Miss Pollen was the practical one, caring for the home and the cooking and pretending to think nothing of philosophy or flower gardening while Miss Bethell made a good show of despising cookery books and rows of vegetables. Their friends will recall many stories of their light-hearted badinage. One afternoon in summer there was a varied company assembled and the conversation became more and more abstruse. Miss Pollen stood it as long as she could and then with a shake of her head slipped away into the kitchen. Some hours later, when the company began to disperse it was discovered that she had been bottling apricots —a whole shelf of them. 'There', she said, with an exaggerated gesture, 'is *my* idea of a working hypothesis.'

Sometimes the little Raven would put her foot down firmly and prescribe some fatigue duty for her over-literary companion. 'She's writing too much,' she would say sadly, and Ursula would be 'made to sit down and scrape potatoes'. And so

The morning's rosebuds passed by unattended,
While I sat bound to monotonous kitchen industry.
Howbeit the heart of my consort was exhilarated,
And for virtuous renunciation I received praise.

But,

The taste of the potatoes was satisfactory
With a sprig of fresh mint, dairy butter and very young green peas.

The humour of this delightful anti-climax is apparent to all who knew Miss Bethell. She had a way of giving to ordinary words a whimsical bias of her own. The word *satisfactory* was one of them; she used it for all situations arising from a perfectly just inexorable logic which, though

it was none of her making or approving, yet had in it some element of clemency. Effie Pollen had a quick ear for such words and used to toss them back to good effect. On the morning after a long discussion on the inevitability of change and the weariness of old age she hurried to the breakfast table with the newspaper. 'You'll enjoy the paper this morning my dear,' she began. 'A number of *satisfactory* deaths, all over eighty.' On another morning the paper carried the story of an unusual wreck. The ship had broken its driving shaft and the propeller had dropped off, carrying part of the shaft with it. It sank slowly over several days while ships stood by to take off the passengers. 'A perfectly *satisfactory* wreck,' said Miss Pollen, handing over the paper; 'a wreck you would have enjoyed.'

The garden poems arose from such a background. When I first read them in manuscript I wondered whether they contained enough that was universal to be appreciated outside the author's circle of friends. So much seemed to depend on a knowledge of the garden and the Raven, of Michael the near-Persian cat, of Omi-Kin-Kan the much petted orange tree. To test them I began to read them to rural study groups and found they evoked a warm response. They were understood; they were felt. I have read them of late to many other groups with the same happy result. No doubt the reason is that quite apart from their value as poetry the matter is derived from the universal art which New Zealanders know, that of gardening. When Miss Bethell heard of the way that they had been received she was surprised and delighted. Others of her friends were urging her to publish so she sent them off to her old friend Mr Arthur Mayhew who was then administering Colonial Education in London. He sent them to Sidgwick and Jackson who published them in 1929.

This is a memory of the garden so I shall refer to one poem only outside the garden book, namely *At the Lighting of the Lamps,* subsequently published in *Day and Night.* It recalls to me a well-remembered scene at one of the little Raven's delightful dinners with the table in the window in the evening glow of a nor-west sky so characteristic of Christchurch; then the lighting of the city lights below and the talk in the twilight.

> And out of the deepening dark
> Of night, above and beyond,

Calm antiphonal stars
Now from on high respond.

The poem strikes me as the most brilliant and original of all her work. The discerning reader will be able to detect the influence of Gerard Manley Hopkins, especially in such lines as

Old gold, pale gold, gold-veiled
Lingering pearl-greyness,
Grey silence of sleep,

but the broad sweep of the poem is essentially her own.

At the Lighting of the Lamps was written early in 1930 at a time when her poetry was beginning to strike deeper and often more sombre notes. Her sensitive spirit was severely disturbed by the turn world affairs were taking. The collapse of the Weimar Republic distressed her. And then came the depression, which, I imagine, greatly curtailed the incomes of both ladies at Rise Cottage.

Miss Bethell took an active part in church work during these years. She had helped to establish, in her old home in Webb Street, St Faith's House for the training of women for the church. She wanted to see a heightening of the life of the spirit to offset the tendencies that were leading the world once more in the direction of destruction. She believed that the education of the spirit needed the same kind of planning that was going into more material pursuits. There must be no more effortless religion; there must be a spirit of discovery in the realm of prayer and meditation. She prescribed for herself a full day of meditation each week and in connection with St Faith's she was active in planning retreats for women.

And then without any warning Miss Pollen died. Miss Bethell had come to depend upon her so much in the running of her house and in the day to day discussion of everything from her garden to her verse that she was indeed bereft. The happy days at Rise Cottage, the *limen amabile* of the heartfelt dedication* to her last book, *Day and Night*, were over. And so she left her beloved garden and went to live in two rooms in St Faith's House.

* Ad te limen amabile levavi oculos
tibi haec carmina et quidquid inest
leporis pietatis signum dedico.

Her days of gardening were over. The next ten years were spent in reading and writing, in church work and in encouraging and helping her ever growing circle of young people. She revised and edited her remaining poems and saw them through the Caxton Press.

The second world war was a great shock to her. The waste of effort appalled her; everything would have to begin again when the new fury had spent itself. Recalling one day the years at Rise Cottage and the plans and the hopes so often expressed in that gentle atmosphere she suddenly said ' Perhaps it was just a fool's paradise that time had to shatter '. One wonders what she would have made of the new post-war world had she lived to see it.

Perhaps hardest of all to bear was the closing of St Faith's House in October 1943. In the next year she died, of cancer. She wrote two or three letters from hospital, telling us simply and objectively of her illness. Then in her last pencilled note, ' I was planning a short letter to you but my next worse stage came rather suddenly and I can't do it. This is my last word I fear; but I may be unconscious a long time.' Death came a few days later. The words she had written of another cloudy night come to mind:

> So sleep I now, for ultimate infinitude,
> As my heart's core thy candle lighteneth;
> With thine effulgence, Lord, thou showest interfused
> The mysterious, cloudy architecture of life and death.

New Zealand has produced no other poetry so clearly original and so delicately sensitive as Ursula Bethell's. It is the work of a rare spirit, humanist, poet and mystic, at home in the rich field of English poetry, expressing itself simply and clearly through the sun, wind and rain of an antipodean garden.

D'ARCY CRESSWELL

I KNEW almost nothing of Ursula Bethell or her work when I returned to New Zealand last time in 1932. My mother knew her, and had written to me about her; but like a few others I had not yet recovered from *Kowhai Gold* and its fifty (or so) female rhapsodists of bell-bird and fern, and I

sadly assumed there were now fifty-one. Then, in Christchurch once more, I asked John Schroder who Evelyn Hayes was, the contributor of some striking verses in the Christchurch *Press;* and I think she also asked him about me; so the meeting, which John arranged, pleased us both. After that I visited her home on the Cashmere Hills a number of times, being given the freedom to do so at will. And as almost no other house in Christchurch was open to me after the *Press* began to serialize *Present Without Leave,* I valued the privilege. It was characteristic of her that she hastened to entertain me when almost no one else would. She was not Christchurch, she was the foothills, that was why. There the outlook was wilder and rougher, and the lords of swamp and shingle, like Cotty Burdon, were not averse to one more avalanche or cloud-burst in the general confusion. But I didn't value her, or any of them, enough. One has periods when one doesn't sufficiently value the persons one ought until they are either absent or dead.

She always seemed to be alone when I went there, but in fact she had a companion whom I think I never met. It seemed we weren't supposed to meet, which puzzled me a little. At the same time I liked the precaution, and I think this was why it was taken, out of consideration for me. I'm not a sociable person. I like to visit homes, especially if there's a garden, and yet be left alone, and to come and go as I please. When afterwards this other woman died, I was astonished to learn of the profound friendship there was between them. I was amazed at Ursula Bethell's anguish then. There were spiritual depths in that house of which I had known nothing. I wish I had kept the letter she wrote to me then. It might have become a valuable literary document in years to come.

It was a small, somewhat gloomy house, and a modest little garden—a square patch between the sitting room windows and the awful, blinding gulf beyond, a piece of lawn and some soil rather than a garden, a neat workshop for ' very earnestly digging '. Or so I remember it. The house was withdrawn, reserved; so were its occupants, one of them strangely so. I remember Michael the cat, but I don't remember Omi-Kin-Kan. It wasn't that sort of garden, where one must be introduced to everything. And she wasn't that sort of garden lover, so boring to me, who won't lend you her garden for an hour to be alone in. I wasn't introduced

to any of the celebrities of the 1929 Sidgwick and Jackson book. Nor to the view. It wasn't one of those homes with a view. The view was for before and after, morning and evening—very early morning I should say, from the verses.

While others slept I rose.

I think the view was like morning and evening prayers. In between, one was too busy, although possibly the service went on inside one. It was around here that she made the adjustment on account of which her poems are so important. And now, forgetting London for a moment, and looking across at the mountains, I feel I should like to speak of her poems; but someone else is doing that. I will just say this, that she was the first to tell the New Zealanders to pull down the blind, to shut out the view, the immensity, the distance, the isolation, which Pember Reeves and the others laboured in vain to make explicable and familiar. Pull down the blind on all that, she said, and go back to just peeping out. It was bound to come. It comes of having houses and blinds, after just having whares and shakedowns. New Zealand wasn't truly discovered, in fact, until Ursula Bethell, ' very earnestly digging ', raised her head to look at the mountains. Almost everyone had been blind before.

I never saw her earnestly digging. And I never met visitors at her house. She had very few, I think. She invited Ngaio Marsh (whom I hadn't met since childhood) when I expressed a wish to see her again; and although both of them behaved impeccably, I remember I was nearly torn in pieces by the impossibility of identifying myself simultaneously with those two—the brilliant, artful, antipodean Pythoness, and the quiet, rugged, darkly-brooding, emigrant gardener. But I don't remember Ursula Bethell well. I don't believe I ever saw her. I think she was short and dark—a bit grey, I'm not sure. Women are hard to see, they disappear so into their clothes. Perhaps it's as well. But I heard her, often: a grave, soft voice. I think she was troubled by my ideas and anxious to help. Her talk was serious, a bit transcendental. I think she was a High Church mystic. Being too preoccupied with myself to listen, I would only pretend to. I liked her verse, her garden and her good heart (and her afternoon teas), all I knew of her—quite enough for a sound friendship, though I doubt if she thought so. I had nothing to give in return, nothing to give anyone then.

I was too distrait, too preoccupied with myself. I had just found that New Zealand wouldn't have my *Progress* at any price, and I had to draw on inexhaustible reserves of egotism within myself to keep going. But although what she said to me never reached me, her verse did, and the contest between her vocabulary and her thought. She impressed me as wholly unworldly and helpful to others. Her long visits to England seem to have been much taken up with charitable work in the East End. But

> I could not go on with my gardening
> For dreaming of loved and lost London . . .

What else does this mean?

We preferred corresponding to talking, and she regularly sent me her verses for my criticism. She rarely took my advice, and I was peeved at her inability to polish and improve what she had written. You could see the same temperament in her house, her person, her speech. Not that she was in the least uncouth; but almost no art, almost nothing but plainness and honest dealing.

I think I was the first in New Zealand to write a serious review of her verse. But if I wasn't, I think I was the first to draw public attention to its startling significance. She hadn't, it seemed, thought it of much account herself. Such modesty often goes with an inability to progress, to improve. But the reverse is fortunately true.

Our correspondence diminished when I left Christchurch for Auckland, and it ceased when I left New Zealand for London for the fourth time in 1938. During the war Denis Glover told me in London that she had been ill, and had moved from the hills into Christchurch, 'into the trivial city'. Age and loneliness forced this fatal descent upon her I suppose. St Albans, wasn't it? A shocking end. But according to Denis she met it gamely. Does Omi-Kin-Kan survive her, I wonder?

M. H. HOLCROFT

When I was ten years old I was obliged to attend a Sunday school in Merivale, Christchurch, and it was then that I first met Ursula Bethell, who was in charge of a class which—undoubtedly through her personal influence—behaved itself

moderately well in the midst of much noise from children whose teachers were less successful in promoting spiritual attitudes. I remember her presence, but not her teachings, for at the time I was not interested in scripture, and my youthful impressions of the period have become vague and unreliable. What I do remember, however, is the Sunday evening when, after school, my younger brother and I were taken to her home in Webb Street. She had discovered my interest in books, and it was arranged that I should inspect her shelves.

That was my first introduction to a library of noble proportions. I remember that there was bread and honey for tea, as in Grantchester; but nothing else remains clear to me except the emotion with which I prowled about the room, looking in vain for titles that were familiar, and inhaling the aroma of books. Ursula Bethell seemed to be rather severe and forbidding, and I felt dimly that I was with a woman quite different from any I had known in an extensive acquaintance with aunts. The impression became stronger when, punctually at six o'clock, she sent us home. I had half-expected to be given a book from those loaded shelves (the giving of presents appeared in those days to be a normal function of women who entertained small boys to tea); but she gave me nothing more than an admonition to read wisely, and I did not understand that she had also given me a lesson in manners which would be remembered in later days. She was to leave shortly afterwards for England.

I did not see her again for about twenty years. In the early thirties I was writing essays for *The Press,* and on the literary page I sometimes found, and read with growing interest and admiration, poems which appeared over the initials 'E.H.'. J. H. E. Schroder told me one evening that the poet was Ursula Bethell. He added that she had been reading my essays, had remembered my name, and had said that she would like to see me. It was arranged that I should go up to Rise Cottage with Schroder on the following Sunday afternoon. The meeting occurred, and there was much lively and satisfying conversation, interrupted for afternoon tea served by Miss Pollen, a companion so unobtrusive that I did not suspect the depth and strength of her relationship with Miss Bethell. Miss Pollen dispensed the tea and cakes, chatted brightly and amiably, and disappeared (she was always disappearing, I found afterwards); Schroder made his

final contribution to a discussion about the incidence of genius, and went off to do his Sunday evening's work at the *Press* office; and I remained, by invitation, to sit in the balcony room, watching the lights appear in a lower darkness, and talking with Miss Bethell of books and ideas and the difficulties of authorship.

That was the first of many meetings. I have no doubt that other people saw her differently, for I think that in her broad sympathy with the arts she could identify herself spontaneously with the interests of her visitors. Our meetings were invariably tête-à-tête: we shared a preference for talking that could be sustained more easily when others were not present. The subject could be hammered out until we came to questions that could not be answered. In those talks we covered many fields, but I found that she was always ready to return to metaphysical and theological argument.

I have known few women who declared themselves to be agnostics. There seems to be a natural bias of the female mind towards the idea of a life larger than the one we know on earth—a life, perhaps, which penetrates our temporal existence. With most women the bias is instinctive; and in Ursula Bethell, too—as her poetry shows, plainly enough—the instinct was powerful. It was supported, however, by a mind which was masculine in its capacity for logical and objective thinking. I do not mean that she was a philosopher. Her ideas had been acquired in wide and discriminating reading, and I remember no evidence of original thinking. But she was at home among ideas. She could take the shock of a new suggestion without a tremor of surprise, and almost always she could relate what had been said to the systems of established thinkers. Further, she could enter that dim region of speculation where ideas are still embedded in feeling, taking hints from the warmth and temper of conversation, and sharing perceptively the excitement of another person's mind.

I do not know whether her faith was unassailable; but I have suspected that, if she was not troubled by doubt, she was at least exposed to the difficulties which come to religious people who need the reassurance of reason. Although she was learned in the specialized literature which has grown up around mysticism, I think she was more of an onlooker and student than a participant. She was wise in many things; but she was not serene in that deep way which

points to a complete possession of the soul. In this, of course, she did not stand alone among the religious and the learned. Knowledge and understanding are not necessarily synonymous with wisdom, which I suppose could be defined as a balance of personality as well as a rich cultivation of mind. Indeed, the cultivated mind is in some ways vulnerable to influences that exclude it from peace. For although the thinker and artist know, by reasoning and intuition, the truths of every new situation which confronts them with problems of thought and behaviour, they do not escape the anxieties which in lesser natures lead to confused ideas and mistaken attitudes. They are so finely organized for the sensitive reactions of taste and feeling that they become victims of their own insight. Even while they see and understand, they continue to feel and suffer. Most of us believe in the myth of the wise man, secure in his developed soul from the shocks of fortune; but in real life we do not discover him. Wisdom is like beauty, in that it is fleeting and elusive, to be sought hopefully and persistently, but never to be held as a final possession.

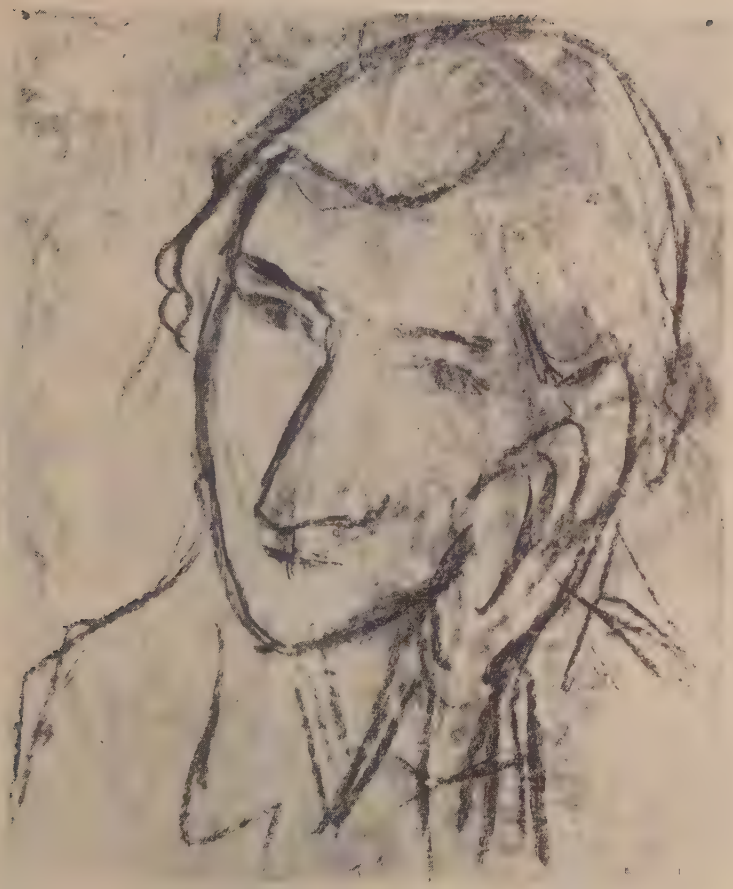
These thoughts come back to me when I remember the characteristic expression of Ursula Bethell's eyes. They had, I noticed many times, a restless and searching look that was almost anxious. And I have never forgotten her inner desolation, as expressed to me in a moving letter, after the death of Miss Pollen. It would be wrong, I think, and unjust to her memory, to describe her as a woman who had found a secure place above the conflict of life. Her vision was wide rather than deep: she looked out to the mountains and the sea from her high place on the hills, and in her creative time she must have known a true exaltation. But she was also a woman, strong-willed and subtle, and I doubt if her inner life ever had the calmness she valued and wanted.

To go beyond these impressions it would be necessary to know more of her family background, and of the influences of heredity and environment which shaped her opening mind. It may be enough to say here that I found in her temperament a number of dominant tendencies, brought sometimes in harmony and sometimes into conflict by an over-riding duality. She was a religious woman who was also an artist, and although her faith is in her poetry, the longing to be at rest in an accepted dogma was sometimes opposed, and sometimes frustrated, by the adventurous impulse of the

poet. Ursula Bethell once told me that waking was always hard for her: she opened her eyes on the morning with a reluctance that was close to physical suffering. (She was then in her sixtieth year.) There is probably a physical explanation, not difficult to find when we remember the nature of her last illness; but the confession seemed to be significant in another way when I came to know her better.

She had an insatiable interest in the newest trends in all the arts. I cannot remember seeing her, either in Rise Cottage or in St Faith's House, without noticing a pile of books, periodicals and reviews overflowing a table nearby. If T. S. Eliot had recently printed a new set of poems, she had them in clippings long before I had heard of their existence. She was the first person who mentioned Gerard Manley Hopkins to me. Only in fiction was I inclined to question the rightness of her judgment. Too often she discovered a novel of the somewhat obscure and mannered type which is taken up by intellectuals for a brief season before it disappears without making the faintest impression on a wider public.

Although my respect for Ursula Bethell grew stronger as I talked with her more frequently, I found that in some ways she had to be resisted. She was generous in her desire to help young writers; but I think she liked to feel that she was influencing their work, and she would pass unconsciously from suggestion and encouragement to a tentative supervision. At one time our friendship became strained, and had to be interrupted, because I felt that in the tasks I had undertaken I needed personal freedom. It is possible that in her maturer insight she could have saved me from false turnings and a prodigious waste of effort; but I feared her gentle pressure towards theology. We did not meet for several years, and in the intervening period I wrote *The Deepening Stream* and found my own way towards the work I wanted to do. From that time onwards our friendship was secure. I found that, with the worst years of struggle behind me, we could meet more as equals. She had not abandoned the hope that eventually I would become orthodox in theology; but she respected my intellectual scruples, and in a series of memorable conversations we ranged freely through art and philosophy. We talked late into the night; and always, when it was time to leave her, there was much still to be said. I see her today most often against the glow of firelight in her house on the hills or in the small flat she



16 × 19 ins.

M. T. WOOLLASTON

Ursula Bethell. Charcoal 1938.

20 × 25 ins.

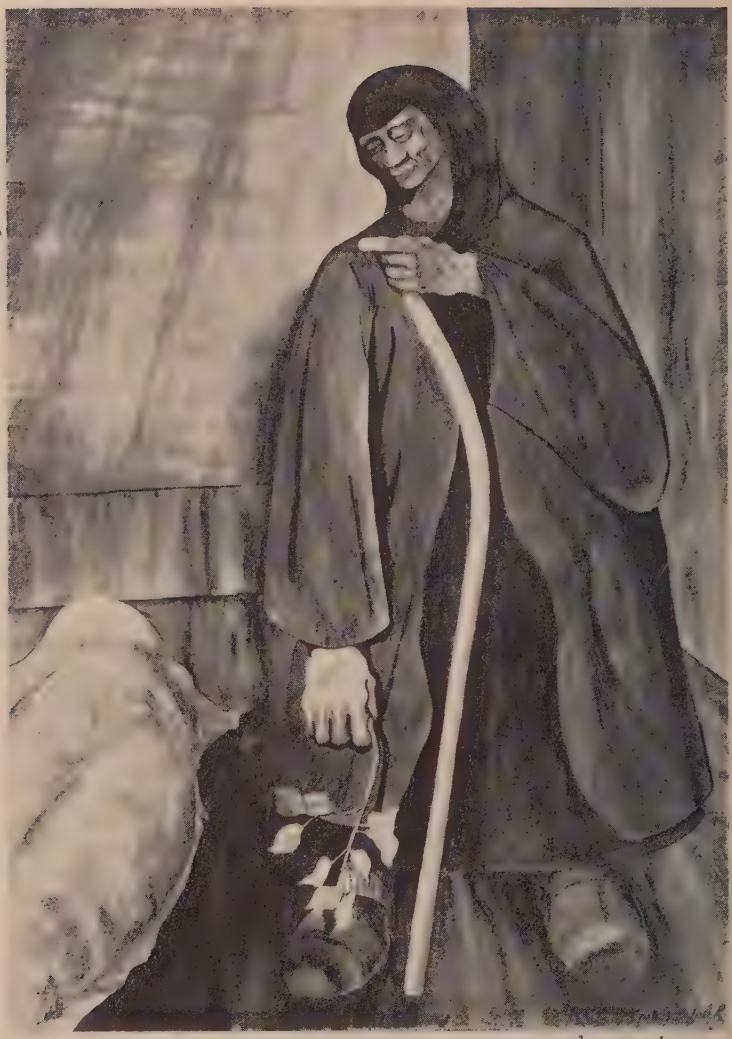
GRAHAM KEMBLE WELCH

Reclining Maori. Watercolour 1947.

$8\frac{1}{2} \times 12$ ins.

GRAHAM KEMBLE WELCH

God creating Adam. Watercolour 1948.



$22\frac{1}{2} \times 31$ ins.

GRAHAM KEMBLE WELCH

Pouri. Watercolour 1948.

reserved for herself in Webb Street. Her tall, slender figure had the carriage of a gentlewoman. She looked out upon the world thoughtfully, a little doubtfully—even, perhaps, a little anxiously. Her presence had a restraining effect, mainly because her fastidious nature seemed to demand from those who spoke with her a careful attention to words and meanings.

Yet there are other and warmer impressions. I think often of a picnic at Ashley Gorge to which my wife and I were summoned on a spacious day in spring. We bowled sedately along the roads of North Canterbury. Miss Pollen drove the 'four-cylindered trusty and time-worn chariot'—an elderly Essex of uncertain temperament. Ursula Bethell, erect and stately, spoke of deep matters, interrupting herself to draw my attention to the colours of leaf and blossom bursting across the countryside, or sometimes to address back-seat warnings to Miss Pollen. Later, by the edge of the river, the hamper was opened, the food displayed and the bottled ale produced for modest refreshment. On the way home we called at Oxford to see the Somersets; and then, with 'Littledene' behind us, we drove at an easy pace through several more hours of tranquil discussion.

I do not pretend to understand Ursula Bethell. There is much in every life that is hidden from us, and opinions and statements are often coloured by the mood of a conversation. But it was impossible to have known her without acquiring some elevation of taste or clarification of ideas. A cultivated person leaves an influence too intangible for analysis. I could describe her as she waited for me to read the original draft of one of her poems; I could speak of the intentness with which, in the later discussion, she would taste words and syllables, or explain what she had attempted to express in the elegiac rhythm of her stanzas. Or I could describe a Sunday night conversation in a silent house, with the darkness of the hills around, and the margins of life drawing nearer in the pauses of our talking. But still the essential personality would remain elusive. For it was always the impact of her mind which had its strongest effect upon me as I walked the long way homewards. And the impression has become enduring. I can feel it today as clearly as when we last talked of books, or when I last looked back to say goodbye as she stood in the glow of her doorway. A rich mind eludes classification: the important thing

is that it stays with us, and is part of our own best experience, long after its 'integument' has disappeared.

JOHN SUMMERS

'RING the word on the counter, Johnny; ring the word on the counter,' she said, flinging an imaginary coin down to test its worth by ear. She looked straight at me before dropping those penetrating grey eyes to the verse on her lap. 'No; no, this will never do—never do; and where did you get that word "swell" from?' I explained. 'At any rate', was the rejoinder from pursed, discriminating lips, 'it is an ugly word and you should avoid it.' Dropping my manuscript Miss Bethell picked up her own and in an effort to help me she went over one of her poems. '"Home"; "home"' (listening for the sound of it). 'No, "hold"; you see; "hold" is the stronger word; the very word for this place.' Once again she glanced at me with eyes which momentarily held each object they rested on in an eagle-like scrutiny. Her iron-grey head moved quickly in keeping with the clipped, terse speech. Thus I remember her; a spare vigorous woman of seventy sitting opposite me in her overcrowded living-room-cum-library.

There, later, I would eat a salad prepared with care and zeal; for to Miss Bethell everything was an art. I remember still my enjoyment, for the meals I was given at St Faith's made a contrast with the heavier farm meals I was used to. A special privilege was the rare drink which followed, provided from a cherished stock and poured into glasses of a shape that made the still clear wine even more satisfying.

There we sat; I swept by a tumult of ideas, and she listening alertly to those feverish winds, ready to say, 'Do you think so? I have always felt that for Christians it is different'; or, 'Ah yes, yes, now here is the very book for you, Johnny.' She never flatly contradicted one's thought, however wayward, but rather brought to the discussion an alternative idea which one must first counter. If the thought contained a gramme of Christian truth she then suggested a book in which I might find it more fully explored. Her knowledge was wide; she certainly knew her books, yet she was always open to new ideas provided they could be shown to originate and be bound within the circuit of Christianity.

Hers was a rare library. Here were books possessing the fire of the heart which warms Christian philosophy and invites the volatile where the cold fortresses of secular thought refuse an entrance. There were the lives and works of Christian mystics whose rare light is refracted through the definiteness of a balanced faith. And Miss Bethell's shelves also held a selection of poetry and novels many of which were exquisitely bound, making the young adventurer all the more eager to discover new idyllic realms. From this seemingly infinite store her youthful friends were free to borrow. By her help, I, in particular, was led from the 'too easy simplifications' (as she put it in a letter to me), of a naive faith, with its intellectually dwarfing influence, to the immense romantic portal of Christian thought. As with awe and excitement I looked upon the great ready to speak from her books, I seemed to look down the farthest avenues of time and to hear the words of Christ echoing, rebounding and extending in their meaning as his servants pondered and re-uttered them. At length all existence became part of a tremendous poem.

At one end of the living-room mantelpiece stood a statuette of the Virgin and Child, and at the other end one of the Venus de Milo. These betokened a synthesis, not wholly to be achieved within time, for which Miss Bethell longed. It was that religion, art and nature should become interfused: that nature should be so moulded and interpreted by art that together they might serve as a minor extension of Christianity. She looked upon nature, that is to say, with the eyes of a religious artist, and, hearing the voices of the birds, she declared

> these enthusiast passages do secretly belong
> To the redeemed throng
> Their new song.

She looked for a similar synthesis in her charges, as she called some of the young friends whose religious difficulties had been confided to her. Thus she commended one for accepting the whole of life rather than contenting himself with the specialized development of a single talent, or deplored that another had not learnt to pray. 'Not to pray', she wrote, 'seems to be living a life of impulse. I think he felt that writing was his prayer—but writing would not be the whole of him. Prayer is not contemplation only—it is obedience, it is dependence, it is penitence.'

After the first difficulties of meeting were over, it seemed natural that she should learn a good deal about one's private life, and that in turn one should share her own struggles and sorrows.

At first she might have been thought forbidding. I remember the caustic remarks called forth by a vain sally in which I jokingly used a lot of long words. Another time she told a friend of mine that she liked 'people to take their work seriously'. These were hasty remarks which might have led casual acquaintances to call her difficult. I shall content myself with saying that eagles are probably disliked by those who admire doves.

Though she spent her childhood in New Zealand Miss Bethell came of the landed gentry. Her long sojourn in England before and during the War of 1914-18 may have reinforced aristocratic ideas; at any rate she seemed to find New Zealand's democratic ways bewildering. She spoke of the manner in which English people grew intimate while respecting class distinctions by talking through them like Piramus and Thisbe through the wall: 'In my class we do such and such, Mr X'; and Mr X would reply in kind. She sometimes expressed amazement that aspirations to beauty and truth should flower in souls which had no opportunity to cultivate them. With her, certain customs had to be observed according to a code which was not written in my mind, and this resulted in situations both amusing and, at times, embarrassing.

Miss Bethell belonged spiritually to a class of people who inherited not only their social position, but a tradition of commensurate service to those not so placed. That, and an insight into the potentialities of certain young friends, enabled her to bring them the means by which they could mature both in spirit and in culture.

Beyond the gateways of her being the accidents of the world gave place to deeper convictions. Miss Bethell believed, as do few, in the democracy of the Spirit. When she stood with her young friends she and they were pilgrims equal in the sight of the Lord to whom they journeyed.

It was arranged that I should, especially in correspondence, call her Felicity. The name is taken from her poem *Envoy*. By not using her Christian name we observed the proprieties, while in spirit we met as persons whose affection will admit of no false bar. She had the greatness to put

aside the pride of years and of the scholarly mind. She gave to the immature, ill-educated and impulsive the regard and respect every human being craves. To such a relationship she brought the dignity it can possess only where the older companion is prepared to waive certain implicit rights. Miss Bethell both gave and accepted criticism where she might have hidden behind a veil of restraint; might have said ' I am afraid, young man, you are not only youthful but presumptuous '. Instead, in answer to a charge of formalism, she wrote ' You lecture me a little, dear, on formalism. But I have always been a creature of impulse—not always good impulses . . . and so I have aimed at balance, but discipline is very difficult for me '.

To her, as she once said, Christianity was ' unnatural '. I formed a deep and lasting impression of her from chance remarks similar to this and from certain elements in her poetry. I saw then neither a woman of seventy nor yet an eagle, but a creature lithe, supple, strong and perpetually young, who, upon meeting Christ, was asked to bring to the deep impulsive love of sun and shadow the dark paradox of the Cross and the meaning of Christian community. The love of her lost and grieved for Miss Pollen kept her within the periphery of human associations, though from those not naturally congenial to her she often expressed a desire to escape.

She could feel neither the presence of the friend who had died nor God's forgiveness for those impulsive moods of hers which had cast a shadow over her memory of their companionship. But as she wrote ' I think I have never known Him truly as love. It has been " Maker of all things, judge of all men ", in the august words of the prayer book.'

She was, then, called upon to halter that strong lithe creature, that Eros which nevertheless leaps forward when she commands to give to her poetry a fullness, a richness and an earthly solidity it could not otherwise possess. Essentially the thought is of Eros in thrall to Agape, and its most explicit formulation is to be found in *The Crucifix*.

She has awakened ' on a clear night and starlit ' thirsting to be moulded in the pattern of Christ. On just such a night, in which the ' soul-intoxicating ' loveliness of God's handiwork is wrapped around her, she thinks to find some intimation of how the spiritual work might be wrought in her.

But now, by wide phosphorescence,
down by the riverside,
of myriad street cressets
lit dim, I descry
a stark carven gibbet.

As she looked through the window ready to accept and to soar to this ecstatic beauty, her slowly roving eyes were fixed by the symbol of her own faith, for

hung there truthful high over my pallet,
the Crucifix, the Crucifix.

It is a paradox, for all beauty is God given. It is the denial of the very highest of natural love by divine; of Eros by Agape, even as the small slightly deformed Virgin on the mantelpiece denied the Venus de Milo.

Hers was a dark night, for there was pain at the back of her mind. In the midst of the beauty she could describe so well lay a regret, a loneliness and a longing for assurance, coupled with a habit of acceptance and penitence built up through years of Christian living.

Yet always in her mind rang the bells of the Resurrection. She held the faith that when this order shall have passed away the mystical consummation of her poem *Waves* would be at hand. At that time, she believed, the paradox would be at an end in a liberation neither less spiritual nor less voluptuous than that prophesied in her poem *Warning of Winter,* where God

Says to the waste: Rejoice, and bring forth roses;
To the ice-fields: Let here spring thick bright lilies.

L. G. WHITEHEAD

I DID NOT become acquainted with Miss Bethell until about fifteen years ago, and then, unfortunately, my chances of meeting her were few and far between, though she came to Dunedin on several occasions and stayed with my sisters. I mention this fact because when I come to write of her, I do not find my memories as full as they would have been had ours been a longer friendship.

She certainly was the most intellectual woman that I have

been acquainted with in New Zealand, and she possessed a wide influence among young people. She had with regard to them a sense of mission which made her anxious to bring all who would listen to her to a vital experience of the religious life. Few things aroused her ire more than the facile attitude of superiority which our New Zealand 'intelligentsia' adopted towards the Christian tradition—an attitude in which they were merely mimics of the secular humanists of England and the U.S.A. It was her sense of mission that made her so strong an advocate of the idea of women priests. She felt that the male sex had enjoyed an entrenched position in this matter and ought to be deprived of an assumed monopoly as soon as possible. The Christian religion to Miss Bethell was not primarily a set of doctrines, but a way of life. She was much too intelligent to suppose that the Church did not rest on a dogma. Even an attitude so spineless as modern religious 'neutrality' has its dogma. The centre of her spiritual life was a deep attachment to Catholic devotion, but mere borrowers of Roman rites she called 'copy cats'. Clerics had no severer critic than Miss Bethell, who never spared their faults, or their habit of taking themselves too seriously. Yet no one had a deeper appreciation than she of really good parish work. This she judged not merely from an intellectual standpoint, but from that of spiritual efficiency, and she would surprise many people by her high regard for some clergyman who had had only a narrow education but who was a devoted parish priest.

There was something very remarkable indeed about this woman, who had independent means, great intellectual powers, but no leisure because she spent so much of her life in the interests of her fellow creatures. I should like to have seen her in London with her slum boys whom she found so entrancing, as she told me herself, because they were 'immortal souls' entangled in the 'squalid other particulars' of modern city life.

The war of 1939-1945 saw her a pacifist. What led her to take this view I was never able to understand. Perhaps it was my own fault, because we hardly discussed the matter, as I was so sure that it is not possible to contract out of our circumstances as this doctrine logically implies we can.

It would not be true to say that Miss Bethell found peace in religion. She found profound and immoveable conviction, though the death of her friend, Miss Pollen, caused her

unbearable agony. When I last saw her a few weeks before her death from a cruel and painful disease, she assured me of her unwavering belief in the goodness of the Power behind the universe. She would have accepted as life's motto the words of Unamuno: 'May God deny you peace, but give you glory'.

ERIC LEE-JOHNSON

GRAHAM KEMBLE WELCH

Over the years few painters have shown real feeling for what is essentially New Zealand about our landscape and our cities. Fewer still have looked for their inspiration to our peculiar way of life in country and town. Today it seems that the scope of most work is narrowed by a too exclusive preoccupation with purely technical considerations—form, composition, colour, texture, and rhythm have become ends in themselves, while the more imaginative qualities of painting are neglected. The new work of the Hokianga painter Graham Kemble Welch is outstanding because it not only taps the reservoir of inspiration within the pattern of our everyday lives and native peculiarities, but in conception it also represents a fruitful break-away from the austere doctrines of pure form that have hampered the flight of imagination in New Zealand, and indeed in most British painting, over the past fifty years.

Mr Kemble Welch is still in his middle twenties, a very young painter in years and in experience, and under the conditions prevailing in this country it is probably too soon to make predictions about his future even though I see the work he is now doing as showing unusual potentialities. But the maturity of his vision, and the freshness of conception displayed in his latest paintings I think fully justify an

examination of what he has accomplished up to this point. The plastic qualities of his work owe little to conventional conceptions of draughtsmanship. While he aims at volume in form and a monumental structure of composition in the posing of individual figures, his ultimate goal is an expressionist one transcending any concern over the niceties of anatomical precision in drawing, sequences of form, or the mere balancing of weight. In this and in other respects he exhibits much in common with the Russian-American, Ben Shahn, whose paintings of the contemporary American scene have lately claimed so much attention in the States and in England. Mr Kemble Welch has outgrown the predilection for elementary flowing compositional lines reminiscent of Blake that was a feature of his earlier religious paintings, and later works, like *Reclining Maori* (reproduced here), and *Man with a Spade,* show the development of an original and peculiar architecture of composition that is more sculptural in conception and extraordinarily expressive.

The strength of his imagery is as yet little served by technical skill. But at this stage I do not see this impediment as a matter for great concern. It has been said that the combination of an inexpert hand with a genuine power of artistic conception is a characteristic one in the history of the minor masters of British painting; and certainly the imaginative force of Blake's painting was never supported by any great mastery of drawing. Fluency with water-colour demands a long apprenticeship, and Mr Kemble Welch, who is entirely self-taught, has refused to borrow any ready-made formula, but instead has already made considerable headway in the development of his own technical devices. These, I have no doubt, he will polish as he proceeds. Technique has in any case little to do with the birth of a painter. Originality and dexterity in this direction come inevitably out of persistent endeavour to communicate the qualities of a personal vision. In the young painter rough-hewn originality is of greater moment and more to be admired than any capacity however dexterous for making polished imitations. Graham Kemble Welch I think has started off with the right foot. By working away on his own outside the established schools, and by drawing on his own experiences as a doctor for his material, he has begun to find himself at an unusually early age. Such marked individuality is not often found in so young a painter.

JAMES COURAGE

AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE

The earthquake happened late on a Saturday night in summer and shook all that coast by the sea and the coastal farms and townships for twenty miles inland, as far as the mountains. At the Blakiston homestead everyone had gone to bed and was asleep, but the shake woke Mr Blakiston immediately. When it was over he sat up in bed, lit his candle and looked about him at the bedroom walls and ceiling. Nothing seemed to be cracked or damaged, though the quake had been a sharp one and had heaved the house up for a moment or two and worried it as a dog worries a rabbit's pelt he cannot swallow.

'Are you all right?' Mr Blakiston asked his wife, who was now awake beside him in the double bed.

'Yes, dear, but you'd better find out if Walter's awake. The quake may have scared him.' She had been a good deal scared herself, waking from a dream of ships on the sea.

Her husband leaned up on one elbow, staring at the yellow candle-flame and listening so as to hear any sound from his son's room along the passage. Walter was six and had a room to himself near the head of the stairs.

'He'd call out if he'd been frightened,' said Mr Blakiston, hearing no sound in the house. He blew out the candle and lay back beside his wife. 'A nasty little shake, all the same,' he added. 'A hell of a nasty little shake.' Presently he was asleep again, lying on his back, snoring softly.

In the morning nothing was found damaged about the homestead, except for the old wash-house chimney, out at the back, which had collapsed on to the roof. Indoors, however, in Mr Blakiston's smoking-room, a thin china vase in which he kept hen-feathers for cleaning his pipe had fallen from the edge of the mantelpiece and shattered itself on the brick hearth. At breakfast time he brought the pieces of the vase to the table, in his hand, to show his wife and son.

'English china,' he explained to the boy, pointing to a delicate capital D on what had been the base of the vase. 'You don't get fine stuff like that made in this corner of the world. D stands for Doulton, the people who fired it.'

But Walter was less interested by the vase than by the news of the earthquake which had not wakened him in the night. 'Did the whole house rock?' he asked his father.

'Rocked a bit, yes, and rose a bit.'

'Will the quake have shaken down any houses we know?'

'Not many, I should think. A few ceilings and chimneys down, maybe.'

Walter ate his porridge. 'I'd like to see an earthquake shake down a lot of houses,' he said presently, 'then all the people in them'd get a good fright.'

'Walter,' said his mother, who sat with her back to the windows, at the end of the table, 'you oughtn't to say things like that, without thinking first. It's very selfish.'

'I did think first,' said Walter softly, to his plate.

'What did you say?' asked his mother. 'You know I've told you not to mumble.'

'I only said I wished I'd wakened up in the earthquake,' he said loudly.

That day was a Sunday. Mr Blakiston was a farmer and though there are jobs to be done on a farm all seven days of the week he usually spent Sundays near the homestead and in the home stables and paddocks, resting himself. On one Sunday out of every four the family went to church in the township below the hills of the farm. Today, however, Mr Blakiston, willingly helped by Walter, put on an old dungaree suit and set-to to clear the bricks from the roof of the wash-house, where the chimney had fallen in the night.

Walter always had questions to ask when he worked with his father. 'Do earthquakes happen in England?' he demanded now.

'Yes,' said Mr Blakiston shortly, 'but not often.' He was a practical man, enjoying the manual work, and slightly bored by the way his son always wanted to talk. The breaking of the vase that held his pipe-cleaners, the vase of English china, had taken his thoughts back to the Old Country and he would have preferred to think about it in silence. He had farmed in New Zealand for nearly twenty years but he still thought of England as home, his father's country, the original pattern. Colonial life was freer, less stiff, he liked it better, nevertheless something of the subtle flavour of the English way of living on which it had originally been founded was vanishing fast. The new climate was changing it, adapting its laws and forms to a younger society. And he

himself had changed, and was changing, with it. Now, as he worked at heaving bricks from the wash-house roof to the ground, he realized that he would never go back to England, as he had once intended to. He was a colonial farmer for life. He was as pleased as though he himself, and not the years, had made the decision.

'Can I drive to the township with Mum in the morning?' asked Walter, beside him on the roof.

'Yes, if you want to. Ask her yourself. Now get down that ladder and pile those bricks by the wall, ship-shape.'

The following morning at eleven o'clock Mrs Blakiston had the horse and gig brought round to the front door by the odd-jobs man who was also the cowman and gardener at the homestead. Every fine week-day at eleven, wearing a flat grey hat with a veil tied under her chin, she drove to the township, four miles away, to collect the mail and the newspaper and to shop at the store. Summer or winter, she wore long elegant leather gloves, to hold the reins.

On this Monday morning Walter went with her, happily hopping down from the gig to open the gates on the road as they came to them. On either side of the road lay wide flat paddocks of tussock-grass, divided by wire fences and burnt yellow by the sun. In the distance, in the summer haze, a mirage of heat flickered along the ridges of the hills. The blue reflection of the sea was on the sky.

When they reached the township, Mrs Blakiston drove the gig along the straggling street of one- and two-storied buildings and pulled up before the verandah of Lakin's General Store.

'Can I go in?' asked Walter, preparing to jump down.

'Mr Lakin will be out in a moment,' said his mother. She opened her purse and found the list of groceries she wanted. 'We'll wait till he comes.'

Presently the store-keeper, wearing a white apron, came out from the shop-door under the verandah. He shaded his eyes against the morning glare and looked up at the gig. 'Glad to see you're all right after the quake, Mrs Blakiston,' he said in a high tinny voice.

'I'm very well, Mr Lakin, but it did frighten us a little, so late at night. Did you have any damage?'

'I slept through it, myself. A few broken bottles on the floor of the shop yesterday morning, though.'

Mrs Blakiston handed over her list.

'Have you heard about old Mrs Duncaster?' asked the store-keeper.

'Heard about her?' Mrs Blakiston was uncertain.

'The quake brought the plaster of the ceiling down on her. She died of shock, they say, early yesterday.'

'Oh, but what a dreadful thing, Mr Lakin—' said Mrs Blakiston. Walter saw her face tighten and her lips twitch in the sunlight. 'I'd no idea—'

'Well, it was a sudden end,' said the store-keeper, looking vaguely up the street. 'I thought I'd better tell you,' he added. 'I don't like my old customers dying.'

'Yes,' said Mrs Blakiston. 'Thank you, Mr Lakin. I hadn't heard about it, of course. I'll go and call on Miss Duncaster this morning.'

The store-keeper nodded and disappeared into the shop, Mrs Blakiston's list in his hand.

'The Mrs Duncaster who's dead,' said Walter, 'is she the one I know?'

'Yes,' said his mother. 'I'd no notion,' she added quietly. 'Yesterday being Sunday, of course, we didn't hear.'

'Did the roof fall right on her face in bed?'

'I don't know, Walter. Don't ask silly questions. You heard what Mr Lakin said.'

'If she'd been properly under the blankets the plaster wouldn't have hit her.'

'She was very old. It's very sad that she's dead,' said Mrs Blakiston. She tilted his sun-hat down over his eyes and made him sit up straight on the hot leather seat of the gig.

'Are we going to visit Miss Duncaster?' he asked, after a moment.

'Yes, we must go and see her. She was very fond of her mother.'

After Mr Lakin had put a tin of biscuits, a bottle of methylated spirits and some smaller parcels into the back of the gig, under the seat, Mrs Blakiston drove up the street to the post office and collected the mail and the newspaper. She then drove straight to the northern end of the township, where the Duncasters lived in one of the oldest homes in the district. Made of cob and with a wooden roof, the small squat cottage was hidden by pine and eucalyptus trees from the road. Inside the fringe of trees a lawn of wild hay-like grass, burnt almost red by the sun, bordered the short curving driveway that led up to the verandah.

'Somebody else is here too,' said Walter. He pointed to a saddled horse hitched by the bridle-reins to a hook in one of the verandah posts. The horse was a bay, roughly groomed and shaggy, a farmer's hack.

Mrs Blakiston looked at the horse for a moment as she drove up, then, carefully holding her long skirt, got down from the gig and knocked at the door of the cottage. She knocked twice, in the hot summer silence, before the door was opened by a tall woman wearing a dark grey dress with a white lace collar.

Walter watched his mother greet Miss Duncaster and kiss her on the cheek. He had hoped that Miss Duncaster might have tears in her eyes for a mother killed in an earthquake: he was disappointed that the light blue eyes and the long pink cheeks of Annie Duncaster looked as ordinary as ever.

'You must come in and have tea,' said Miss Duncaster's deep voice to his mother. 'And Walter with you. Please, please do. I'd like it.'

'But you have a visitor already,' hesitated Mrs Blakiston.

Miss Duncaster threw a quick glance at the saddled horse swishing its tail before the verandah. 'Nobody's here,' she said. 'Nobody at all. Do please come in.'

So Mrs Blakiston took the gig into the shade of the eucalyptus trees, tied up the horse, and took Walter with her into the cottage. 'You must be quiet,' she whispered to the boy in the doorway, 'and not ask questions.'

The inside of the cottage was dark and smelled cool after the hot morning. The tiny sitting-room behind the verandah was made even smaller by the glass cases of china and the shelves of books against the walls. A large, creamy-white ostrich egg hung by a string in a corner, by far the most interesting thing, to Walter, in the whole room. When Miss Duncaster had brought in the tea, he sat himself down so that he could gaze at this amazing egg while his mother talked.

'I've only just heard about your mother, Annie,' said Mrs Blakiston. 'I'm so very sorry.'

'Mother hated earthquakes,' Miss Duncaster said evenly. 'We had a bad one here, you know, just after Father and she had first come from England. She'd always been frightened of them since then.'

'They frighten me too. Did your mother die quite suddenly?'

'A little of the ceiling fell, you know, in her room. I got her out of bed and into a chair and ran downstairs to make her a cup of tea. When I got back she was dead.' Miss Duncaster put down her cup and gazed out of the window. 'It was all a great shock to me. The earthquake itself and then my mother dead.'

'I slept all through the earthquake,' put in Walter. 'didn't I, Mum?'

Mrs Blakiston ran her fingers over the gloves in her lap. 'Yes, dear, luckily,' she said.

Miss Duncaster, who had begun to sniffle, suddenly cheered up and said, 'Of course, my mother was no longer a young woman. Still, even at sixty, one likes to live. And she had had a wonderful life, you know. Young people like me can't hope for nearly so much.'

'Yes, Annie, I know,' said Mrs Blakiston, who knew also that old Mrs Duncaster had been seventy if she'd been a day and that her daughter was thirty-five. 'It is hard for you, being left alone,' she added.

Miss Duncaster got up, fumbling in her belt for her handkerchief. 'Oh, thank you, thank you. But I shan't let myself be lonely.' She glanced quickly out of the window, then moved to the door. 'I'd like you to come and see my mother now,' she said. 'She's lying upstairs in Father's old room. She looks beautiful.'

'Yes, of course I'll come up,' said Mrs Blakiston. 'Walter, you stay down here for a few minutes.'

'Oh, but I want Walter to see her too,' said Miss Duncaster. 'She always loved children, you know.'

The stairs were almost as narrow as a ladder and so dark that Miss Duncaster lit a candle to usher the boy and his mother round the stair-head and along the upper passage. The air, close under the roof, was as warm as the inside of a bird's nest.

'In here,' said Miss Duncaster, opening a door. She made Mrs Blakiston and Walter go in first, while she blew out the candle.

The small bedroom was crowded with dark furniture and lit only by a window in the slope of the roof. The bed was against the wall by the door, and on the bed, covered by a sheet up to her chin, lay the dead Mrs Duncaster. Walter was startled: the creamy-white, oval face was like the ostrich-egg downstairs, he thought, except that somebody had

pinched into it a nose and mouth and drawn a grim line down each cheek. He hadn't remembered that old Mrs Duncaster looked so severe: she had always laughed at him and given him jujubes.

On a table at the head of the bed stood a vase full of green leaves and large open milky flowers that gave out a thick smell of lemons into the room.

'Magnolias,' said Mrs Blakiston gently, her head on one side. She loved flowers. 'Beautiful,' she added.

'I picked them from the garden,' said Miss Duncaster. 'Mother planted the tree the year I was born. It has grown up with me. I felt she'd like to have the flowers beside her now.'

'Yes,' said Mrs Blakiston, 'yes, Annie, of course.'

Walter turned aside from the bed to look at a box made of dark polished wood. It stood on the floor by the window, with brass handles and a lock of inlaid steel.

'That was Father's instrument case,' explained Miss Duncaster, beside him. 'He was a doctor, you know—the first doctor the district had. All his scalpels and things are in that box."

'Did he come from England?' asked Walter.

'A long time ago, in a sailing ship, with my mother. Mother was home-sick all her life for England, but she didn't go back, even when Father died.'

At that moment Walter saw that one of old Mrs Duncaster's hands was showing under the edge of the sheet on the bed and that the hand held a book with an animal of some sort printed in gold on the black cover. 'What's that?' he asked, pointing.

'My mother's Bible,' said Miss Duncaster.

'No, I meant the—'

'Oh, the crest on the cover? That's a griffon, my mother's family crest. She was proud of that.' Miss Duncaster sighed, and added, to Walter's mother: 'I never knew any of the English family, of course. They meant nothing to me. I'm a colonial.' She pulled the sheet over the dead hand and straightened the magnolias in their vase by the bed. 'The funeral is the day after tomorrow,' she finished in a firm voice.

Presently they went downstairs. Mrs Blakiston said that she and Walter must be going home.

'You have been so kind,' said Miss Duncaster, smoothing her fair, fluffy hair. She seemed to be looking round the

sitting-room for something to give them as a reward. 'Wait now and I'll cut you some magnolias from the garden, before you go. Yes, let me.'

The huge magnolia tree, with dark leaves shining in the sun and with white flowers high up like sea-birds in the branches, grew at the back of the house. While Mrs Blakiston and Walter stood and watched, Miss Duncaster made big agile leaps to get at the flowering branches. She dragged them down and broke off the creamy heads, careful not to bruise the petals.

'They go brown so easily,' she explained. She laughed, with flushed and untidy face, handing over the bouquet to Walter. 'He's amazed I can jump so high,' she said to Mrs Blakiston, laughing again, this time at the boys' face.

'I only jump like that when I'm jumping for joy,' said Walter. 'Don't I, Mum? I can jump a hell of a height.'

'What did I hear you say, Walter?'

He had picked up the bad expression from his father. 'I can jump as high as my belt,' he amended softly, swinging the bunch of magnolias in his hand.

They walked round to the front of the house. While Mrs Blakiston went into the shade of the trees to fetch the gig, Walter was left with Miss Duncaster. He looked round and saw that the riding horse that had been tied to the verandah post was no longer there.

'Where's the horse gone?' he asked.

'What a funny boy you are,' said Miss Duncaster. 'What horse?'

He pointed with the magnolias. 'It was over by the verandah,' he said. 'We saw it.'

Miss Duncaster bent down and gave him a sudden sharp slap on the arm. 'You're bruising the flowers,' she snapped. 'There was no horse.'

Mrs Blakiston drove up with the gig. 'Come along, Walter. Say good-bye nicely to Miss Duncaster.'

On the way home from the township with his mother Walter said: 'I didn't ask too many questions, did I?'

'No,' said his mother doubtfully, 'not as many as I expected.'

'Then why did she slap me?'

'I don't believe she did. You invent such things.'

That evening when Mr Blakiston came in from the farm

to a late tea he glanced at the big bowl of magnolias in the middle of the dining-room table.

'Not ours, are they?' he asked.

'No.' His wife told him of their morning visit to the Duncasters and of Mrs Duncaster's death in the earthquake. While she talked she fiddled on the table with the broken pieces of the vase of English china that had held her husband's pipe-cleaners and that had fallen during the night. She was sticking them together with seccotine. Walter, his own tea finished, watched her and listened to her talking.

'Of course it's terrible for Annie, being left alone in that old cottage,' he heard her say presently to his father, 'though I must say she seemed very brave about it.'

'Brave?' Mr Blakiston paused. 'I should think she's damn well delighted! For ten years and more she's been cooped up at home looking after that old woman. She'll have a chance to marry now.'

'I don't think she's the marrying kind.'

'Don't you believe it. I hear more than you do.'

'Does Joe Sleaver ride a bay horse?' Walter put in suddenly.

Mr Blakiston looked surprised. He took his pipe from between his lips and studied the bowl of it before answering. 'Yes,' he said, 'now I come to think of it, he does ride a bay.'

'Walter,' interposed Mrs Blakiston warningly to the boy, 'you know what I said to you to-day, about not asking questions, don't you.'

'I only meant—' began Walter, and stopped.

'I wish,' said Mr Blakiston, 'I wish I knew what the devil you were both talking about. Why shouldn't Joe Sleaver ride a bay horse if he wants to?'

'Walter thinks he saw a bay horse tied up to the Duncasters' verandah this morning,' explained Mrs Blakiston.

'I did see it,' cried Walter. 'Mum saw it too!'

His father and mother exchanged a glance. Then, with his pipe in his mouth, Mr Blakiston leant forward and lightly took up from the table a piece of the vase his wife was mending with seccotine. 'Well,' he said offhandedly, grinning as he spoke, 'well, we don't have earthquakes every night.'

'I did see the horse,' insisted Walter, and felt that like all older people his parents were in some sort of conspiracy

against his finding things out. ' I did see the horse.'

' Of course you saw the damned horse,' said his father suddenly. ' Shut up about it, that's all.' And he went on, to his wife, evenly: ' I was thinking yesterday, you know, I shall probably never go back to the Old Country. It's too far away now, too long ago.'

J. C. BEAGLEHOLE

THE NATIONAL ORCHESTRA

AN ARTICLE AND A POSTSCRIPT

EARLY in the year I wrote for *Landfall* an article on our National Orchestra—not without some travail of spirit, for the subject is a prickly one, and I am no fonder than the next man of grabbing at nettles. But it seemed that somebody ought to say something. The article had been promised; nevertheless when it was finished I had my doubts; for the 1948 season had not begun, it was said that the New Zealand Broadcasting Service was having a hard job to collect certain essential players, no programmes had been announced, and—who was to say?—something might happen during the year to alter opinions and judgment, to make pointless, or even rather silly, comment written too soon, in ignorance of developments already prepared for. So with the ambitious desire to be up to date I held the article back. It was useless, one can't be up to date; and at this time of the year one certainly can't be more cheerful than one was seven or eight months ago. Here, then, is the bulk of the article, shorn of some preliminary paragraphs, now superfluous, devoted to the consideration of previous controversy; and followed by a postscript that tries to be reasonable. I don't pretend that there isn't a great deal more to be said about the orchestra.

It seems that even in New Zealand the discussion of music arouses more passion than the discussion of any other art. It has often been stated, baldly, that all musicians are mad. I am not prepared to go so far as that; but certainly the emotional context extends far beyond musicians to, curiously, people who are candidly ignorant of music. It is not always easy to see why. Musicians themselves, of course, are human beings, and have the usual human characteristics of vanity, and the wish to hang on to a job, and get paid as much for it as possible, and therefore tend to dislike any reflections on their professional competence, except those reflections which cast lustre. In the case of the orchestra, of course, a number of jobs that seemed good ones had been secured. In particular the job of conductor—it is no use beating about the bush—had been conferred against the opposition of a good many disinterested people, in circumstances which seemed to have little relation to the best method of appointing a conductor to found and train an orchestra in New Zealand at that precise moment. Then, again, the orchestra had been organized as part of the NZBS, a government department naturally the centre of high controversy and of personal exasperations. And still again (I shall not say finally) it had been started, or rather brought up to its inaugural concert, in an atmosphere of such ballyhoo that the listener might well have been deafened out of any attempt at critical attention well before the first note of the National Anthem sounded in the Wellington Town Hall. To reserve judgment was tantamount to reserving judgment on the Wisdom of God or the British Empire; to give a measured judgment was the last intoxication of self-will.

We must remember, too, that the sight of an orchestra at work is an inspiriting one, and that when it produces a loud and cheerful noise the effect on a good many people not familiar with orchestras is probably equivalent to the effect on the more sophisticated of that first electrifying, astonishing concert in Wellington of the Boyd Neel group. There is nothing patronizing in writing thus; it is not the fault of the majority of New Zealanders that they haven't been outside their country, or that a long succession of first-rate orchestras has not been to visit them. We can't help being a little naive. That is why we have so often fallen victims to the second-rate in visiting 'artists', and proved a happy hunting-ground for their genial impresarios. (Not last year,

though—there were so many of them that even the best, even a superb artist like Ninon Vallin, I am told, departed a financial flop.) So the enthusiasm over the actual performances of the orchestra may perhaps be put down partly to our endearing naivety. And after all, it was, it is, Our orchestra, our National orchestra, even if the Broadcasting Service has somehow got between the National and the Orchestra.

The foregoing sentences are not to be taken simply as poking unpleasant fun. On the contrary, it seems to me a matter of profound importance for a country to have an orchestra it can call its own, for reasons which need not even be touched on. But if individual music-making, family music-making, community music-making, is the basis of all healthy and permanent musical culture, it is of equally profound importance not to overvalue one's own performances. Nor to undervalue them, certainly. We desperately need a scale of values, a measure of achievement more exacting than that of the fond mother hearing little Willie play at Miss Y.Z.'s pupils' concert. Little Willie may be pretty good for his size and age; but after all we are not going to talk about Solomon and Schnabel and little Willie as the Three Titans of the Keyboard. One's inside rather turned over therefore, one felt rather dreadfully embarrassed and ashamed, at some of the laudatory remarks made by Mr Warwick Braithwaite at the close of some of the concerts which he had so competently conducted. For Mr Braithwaite knew all right that the orchestra wasn't yet well on its way to being one of the best in the world. He had got some very good work out of it, but that is a different matter. One does need a measure of discrimination, one must have some sort of critical balance. To be uniformly and wilfully mean with praise would be as absurd as to be permanently on the heights of ecstasy. I therefore record here that though the orchestra, playing in Wellington, murdered Colin Horsley in his Rachmaninov concerto, and later in the year turned parts of *Scheherazade* into a cross between a Rugby test and a Roman holiday, on the other hand it played, at the one concert, both the *Hebrides* overture and *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring* beautifully, with a lightness, elasticity and finish hard to overpraise. I can still hear that lovely clarinet cuckoo call just piercing the delicate haze of the strings. Delius and the young Mendelssohn are hard to get just right. And I remember with elation, having a vulgar British strain in me,

the controlled tone and volume of the brass in the Nimrod variation of the *Enigma* in a final concert that was notable also for the maiden performance of Mr Lilburn's *Song of the Antipodes*. Having said which by way of instance, I hope, not very confidently, no person will now accuse me of uniform and savage denigration of everybody in the orchestra, from conductor to percussion.

Enough time has gone by since the excitement of that inaugural concert to make it possible to discuss the orchestra, its development and future, with less heat than formerly. The novelty has worn off, we can think of it as something to live with, and therefore to consider rationally. Its more touchy members may at this stage not burst into flame beneath the faint breath of criticism. It has had experience, in rehearsal and performance, of three conductors, it has been on its toes as well as sitting back squarely in its seats. All, we are given to understand, has not gone uniformly well with it in its management and internal relations. There have been resignations beyond those naturally incident to the life of any large organization of human beings. There is no reservoir of first-rate string-players in New Zealand, and no reservoir at all of woodwind and orchestral brass players. For a time towards the end of 1947 the outlook for future concerts, it was said, was black indeed. Mr Tyrer, on a flying visit to England, hopes to pick up some key men, and it is certainly to be hoped that he can induce them to come out, either for life or on a long-term contract, to set a standard of performance and to train others to take their places in due course.* We should not have to be driven frantic because one player has to go into hospital and another is smitten by wanderlust and another, shall we say, sometime in the future decides to go overseas for wider experience, or half a dozen young ladies in the strings elect to get married. The tenure of healthy life of the orchestra is all too frail. New Zealand has got to clutch to its bosom the musicians it has, as well as to acquire more. The awful year in which it lost Maurice Clare, Marie Vandewart and Vivien Dixon, all three, without the slightest move in responsible and official quarters to retain them, is still a too close and vivid memory with many of us. True, they might not have had much fun in the orchestra—it is even improbable that, as

* This sentence dates, but after consideration I leave it, asking the reader to throw his mind back to the beginning of the year.

things turned out, they would have agreed to work in it; but they gave us standards of executive accomplishment, knowledge, and musicianly integrity which we can ill afford to do without; witness the Bach unaccompanied playing by both Maurice Clare and Marie Vandewart. Well, they are gone; if the Boyd Neel Orchestra ever comes back Clare may come back as its leader; let us make up our minds not to tolerate such losses so easily again. Let us make up our minds, furthermore, that it is no disgrace to New Zealand, nor anything to be particularly concerned about (as one or two ministers of the Crown seem to have been concerned) that we have at the moment to 'import' competent players of certain instruments. A New Zealand national orchestra does not necessarily have to consist exclusively of 'New Zealand boys and girls'. After all, we once had to import all our piano teachers, and hard as they and their progeny have worked in the intervening decades, we still seem to have room for a few more. And piano-players are much commoner domestic animals with us than oboists, or masters of the French horn or the cor anglais. How did Mr Goossens feel when he was met in Auckland with the simultaneous demand for the César Franck symphony and the information that there was no cor anglais? Maybe he was used to it. He, like the rest of us, lives in a changing world.

If we can get a few people into the country, and into the orchestra, of proper competence both as players and as teachers, it seems likely that we can afford to forget about individual shortcomings. This presupposes of course that the orchestra is, and will continue to be, an agreeable body to work in. This is where, on the basis of remarks going round the country as well as of declared administrative policy, we may legitimately begin to harbour doubts. After all, the foundation of the whole thing is rehearsal, practice, working together. It seems to me that, if the orchestra is ever going to be a really good one, the basis is wrong, and was wrong from the start. Part of the time the players practise together, part of the time they are dispersed in groups in the main centres supplying music over the local radio stations, and 'practising' individual parts of scores under some subleader. That is, they have two functions. After this local endeavour of 'reading through' the allotted task of symphonies and concertos and all the rest they come together and the pieces of the jig-saw puzzle are fitted together in

further practice, or what appears to be endless 'reading through'. No one can argue that the orchestra doesn't work. By the end of last year, if my information is correct, they were worked to a standstill, physical and mental. But was it the right kind of work? Quite early in the season the printed programmes carried an account of the tremendous repertory that had been piled up—heaven knows how many symphonies, let alone anything else. Of course, it was all eyewash—rah-rah publicity if you like—but how absurd and how needless! The orchestra wasn't going to play all these works; it couldn't in the time; and granted the time, it couldn't if it had tried. No doubt it had 'read through' them all, in bits or as a whole; and no doubt I have read through all Beethoven's pianoforte sonatas, but that is different from giving a finished performance of the Hammerklavier. I suggest that, if we are ever going to have anything like a solid musical culture, we can't build it on a fundamental falsity. But such lavish statements are fundamentally false, and dangerous as well. They mislead the public. They mislead the players—at least the younger among them; and the cynicism which they no doubt inspire in the experienced is pretty well as bad. Surely it would be better to take a severely limited number of basic orchestral works, and really to master them in structure and phrasing and texture. After all, there is a limit to what you can put across in one season, and you are not giving all your concerts in the one place. I have not forgotten, I may add, that the orchestra is not preparing merely for one season; and I have not forgotten the necessity for freshness and musical relaxation. But what the unfortunate players seem to have got is continual change without relaxation, which does not conduce to freshness. For the time being, it seems to me, we can afford to dispense with most of the Rhapsodies, and with all the Moto Perpetuos in existence.

Apart from methods of practice when the orchestra is together, how is this system of meeting-only-to-part-again going to work out in the long run? Badly, I suggest—even fatally. For the essence of orchestral playing is coherence. But how are you going to cohere musically if you don't cohere physically? It is perhaps easy enough to see the non-musical reasons for this queer arrangement. No doubt it would be difficult and expensive to house the whole orchestra permanently at a Wellington base. No doubt the other broad-

casting stations want a stiffening of good ensemble players. No doubt, Christchurch and Dunedin and Auckland feel pretty hardly done by to lose so much of the best of their talent. I have heard inhabitants of these great cities lament as dwellers in a desert, once running with fresh rills and thick with pomegranates and date-palms, who gaze at some far-off oasis where by a tyrannical Sultan's subtle work all the water has been diverted and all the rifled orchards deposited in heaped-up profusion. Of course things aren't quite like that, either in Wellington or in the subject provinces. Even if they were, there would still be two observations to make. The first is this: music is a long-term thing. I have already bemoaned the shallowness of our musical reservoir, the loss to New Zealand of certain individual musicians, but individuals are more easily replaced than orchestras. The remedy for loss is replacement. We can replace by importation, and by training our own youth. By all accounts, the said youth seem to have enough native ability. As a basis of minimum desirability, we should aim at having a first-rate string quartet permanently playing together in each of the four main cities and its province, with income so guaranteed that the members could choose their pupils. They should be specifically exempted from orchestral service. This is going a bit further than the demand for a single first-rate national quartet, on the lines the Queenslanders have been working on, but we can afford it. By teaching, our quartets could help keep up the supply of string-players; by performance they could set a standard, and they could meet the demand for decently-played chamber music which seems to be a growing one in the country, and which should certainly be stimulated.

The second observation is this. Really, if we are going to have an orchestra, from the musical point of view it doesn't matter where the orchestra has its headquarters. Let its members be kept together for rehearsal at Auckland or Wellington or Christchurch or Dunedin or Rotorua or Queenstown or anywhere else, but let them be kept together. If we are going to give the first place, not to music but to the placation of provincial feeling or to the administrative convenience of the Broadcasting Service, or if it is a matter of the stubborn irreducible facts of housing, well then, let's be brutal about it, and say honestly, The state of New Zealand and the public musical conscience being thus-and-thus,

we can't get anything better than a third-rate orchestra, but here for the time being is the best we can do; or if we can't be as honest as that, at least let's stop talking the rhodomontade which has been used not only in official publicity and by newspaper reporters but by some people who ought to know better.

It is obvious that whoever has the job of conducting the orchestra will have some major problems, not strictly musical, to deal with. Anybody at all who takes it on will need to have certain allowances made when musical judgments are passed. One is brought at last to the ticklish, unavoidable, implacable subject of the conductor. Candour compels me to say flat-footedly that I do not think Mr Tyrer is the man for the job. I am far from wanting to do him less than justice. I would indeed, knowing some of the difficulties, in case of dubiety rather overstate any man's merits. But from all the indications that have become public, his rôle is not that of an orchestral trainer. He must, as he was in the affair from the outset, and behind the scenes well before the curtain went up, have had a hand in the formation of policy, and policy, as I have argued, seems frequently enough to have been imperfect. I don't think his platform appearances in Wellington have been very fortunate. The Boyd Neel people spoke highly, and sincerely, of the concert they heard in Auckland. It was conducted by Mr Goossens, and Goossens was name enough to nerve the orchestra to achievement out of the ordinary, apart altogether from his rehearsal methods. The conductor to whom the players seem to have taken best, who seems to have rehearsed them most skilfully, and to have got the best out of them (at Wellington concerts at any rate) was Mr Braithwaite; and certainly Mr Braithwaite, though not numbered among the first half-dozen world-figures, impresses one as a person thoroughly versed in orchestral music and practice, and pretty thoroughly the master of his medium. Master of the medium I do not think Mr Tyrer is. How far he is even master of the orchestra in a formal sense seems a matter of doubt; for the unhappy consequence of the controversy over his appointment was one of those ambiguous statements which the Prime Minister is so adept at composing in times of trouble—and which may have their uses in international politics—to the effect that he was to assemble, and train, and conduct, but not necessarily to be taken as the conductor of, the orchestra

for a period of two years. That formula, it appears, has not tended to strengthen his position, if strengthening was what was needed. But we may doubt the utility of strengthening his position; we may doubt the efficacy of a different status, important as status can be; what was needed was a different personality.

Apart altogether from what was done, it was done in a wrong way. It could scarcely have been done in a worse way; and in saying this, I may register my conviction that the Prime Minister quite genuinely thought that he was acting for the best. But Mr Fraser, though his knowledge is wide, had a limited experience of the founding of orchestras. There was of course the famous cable from Sir Thomas Beecham, which taken at its face value was a godsend to the Government—and at that particular moment, it would have been very awkward to have made enquiry into any other value it had. One must sometimes forget Sir Thomas Beecham's reputation as a mordant wit. The suggestion is not that every job that's going in New Zealand should be filled solely by advertisement, as though we were perpetually engaging office boys or junior typists. That certainly is an inadequate technique in appointing to important posts, as anybody knows who has been taken in by paper qualifications from England. We cannot afford to be niggardly of care, and we cannot afford to be niggardly of money. 'Afford' is a beautiful word. It was said more than once during the course of the controversy, and as stating a received and unquestionable fact, 'We can't afford to compete with all those places'—to wit, cities in America and elsewhere. We, one of the richest countries in the world, can't afford to compete, not only with the dollar-overloaded United States, but with poverty-stricken England and Europe! On any decent scale of values, it simply doesn't make sense. We can't afford not to compete. We start something that we hope will mark an epoch in the life of our New Zealand community as decisively as the invention of refrigeration, and then we recoil from the cost. . . . No, we don't do anything as dramatic as that; one doesn't recoil from something one has never faced; we merely take it as axiomatic—as casually as we take the continued existence of Wellington harbour—that we can't compete. If we had studied the history of some of the existing orchestras of the world whose paymasters had decided at some time or other that they could

conveniently cut expenses we might have felt like doing a bit more about it. We wouldn't have to look further than Sydney. And in the end Sydney decided to get Goossens. The standard of an orchestra needs as much and as eternal vigilance as the maintenance of liberty or any other of the great causes of the world; and the vigilance which is the price of those things is itself purchased only at a price.

If the reader agrees with me in all this, or in a substantial portion of it, we shall be driven to conclude, I think, that the value of the orchestra is still largely a potential value. As a potential value it should certainly not be underestimated. After all, it has been started and it has begun to accumulate that priceless and indispensable thing, the experience of the team. When, in one's more jaundiced moments, one considers humanity in general, and its stupidities and reluctances, or the humanity of New Zealand in particular, perhaps the very existence of the orchestra will seem a miracle, on account of which we may contemplate the Prime Minister with some gratitude and awe. It exists, too, with a large percentage of young players, who, properly treated, we may reasonably expect to give us a sort of freshness and *élan* which we might not get from a too professionally-weary body of visitors. What we should hope for, what we should work for in our support and criticism, I suggest, is something of the quality that Boyd Neel's strings gave us—liveness and lightness and bite and elasticity; something of—yes—a joy of living which we at least in this comparatively happy Eden ought to be capable of feeling. The last perfections of subtlety we need not hope for; we shall probably continue to get at times some pretty rough playing, whoever is waving the baton; but we can take some roughness if a spirit of integrity is there, and roughness is not the same as coarseness. If, again, we are talking in terms of potentiality, we do well not to forget the stimulus the orchestra must be to the native composer. The performance of *Song of the Antipodes* was a notable event, both for itself and as an earnest of other work we may expect. We want more Lilburn; and we want more Lilburns.

There is one matter that should probably be discussed in connection with the orchestra which I have no space to discuss here, but which possibly would be best left for decision till further administrative experience has been gained. That is the association of the orchestra with the NZBS—an associ-

ation of employee with employer. It doesn't seem quite satisfactory; and if in due course we get a conservatorium of music also in the same relation to the NZBS, which is not beyond the bounds of possibility, it will be less satisfactory still. The NZBS disposes of such power that it might be wise to take certain precautions. It might conceivably make a better set-up if the Broadcasting Service ceased to be a government department and if it, and the orchestra, and a conservatorium, and a national theatre, all became semi-autonomous organizations responsible to some sort of Ministry of Fine Arts. Though whether some of the Art we get over the air can be classified as Fine is no doubt open to question. This last paragraph is not to be taken as an attack on the NZBS, but simply as an expression of opinion that the administrative process might be re-examined with profit one way or another.

POSTSCRIPT

WHERE are we now? These words are being written in September, and as they will not appear in print till December it is possible that by then anything now said will appear merely waste and irrelevant. Nevertheless some things cry out to be said. The time of Mr Tyrer's contract is nearly up, but so far there is no indication that the Government has any policy for the future.

There has, one is assured, been a good deal of talk on the inside; but it has, one is assured, been confidential talk; and nobody, one is assured, who is interested as a musician or a concert-goer has any right to know what it is. The wildest rumours have been going the rounds: the Government is fed-up, the orchestra is to be divided into four studio groups, the orchestra is to be abolished, the players are in revolt, the players are in despair, half the players are resigning, all the players are resigning. You take your choice. It is known that within the orchestra there has been a good deal of ' unrest '—dissatisfaction with the way the show is run; and certainly there have been too many resignations to make plausible the official assurance that everybody is co-operating nicely in one big happy family. It is to be noted that these resignations have taken place in spite of the fact that the rate of pay in the orchestra is quite good—good

enough to be highly attractive to musicians for whom the only alternative is the desperate hackwork of too much teaching: you can't make the beginnings of a living in New Zealand as an individual performer. Then something must be wrong. If the orchestra were some other sort of body, if it were for example the University, there would probably at this stage be demands for a Royal Commission.

My article was held back with the feeling that perhaps, after all, it was not quite fair. After all, the orchestra had been in existence just under a year. Perhaps in its second year it would show an advance; perhaps Mr Braithwaite would come out again, or some other visiting conductor of the sort the Prime Minister once talked about, who could pull scattered bits into shape, and energise, and inspire. Or perhaps, in view of all this unrest, if that didn't happen, somebody would stage a show-down. The Musicians' Union has been said to feel pretty strongly on a number of points. What in fact has happened? One cannot say anything about the orchestra because, virtually, the orchestra has not been heard. There were a couple of scratch concerts early in the year in Wellington; and then, until a short time ago, the majority of the players were touring the country playing for a third-rate professional-amateur production of *Carmen*. The minority were sitting up in an Auckland broadcasting studio, performing 'dinner-music'. If ever there was nonsense, this was it. Opera is an admirable form of art, *Carmen* is a good opera, but what in the name of reason was our 'symphony orchestra' doing knocking out the music of *Carmen* every night, when it should have been giving good solid concerts of its own? Why the waste of the abandoned people in Auckland? Why the waste of money? Had somebody come to the conclusion that a year's regular orchestral concerts was quite enough, and that a jaded public needed a change? Or did the orchestra, or the conductor, or somebody else need a change? Who is it that can dispose of a national orchestra in this arbitrary and peculiar way? After this flight off the tangent, it is announced that there are to be further concerts, with concertos by Richard Farrell in Auckland and Theo Salzman in Wellington, but what sort of concerts will they be, what sort of concerto playing from the orchestra can we hope for? Under the impact of such a policy one is forced back naturally on a series of rhetorical questions—however deplorable

the rhetorical question may be as a mode of argument, and however important it is to get the discussion of the orchestra out of the region of rhetoric.

Well, then, asking another question, what should we unrhetorically hope for? It would probably be unreasonable to hope for any good performance by the orchestra in the remainder of this year. When these words are read the reader will have the advantage of the writer: he may have heard some quite unpredictable, some miraculous performance. Some concerto player may have magicked everybody. But going on past musical experience and on logic we had better be pessimistic. Then we must transfer our hopes to next year. Any hope we have must depend—let us be quite frank—on the permanent conductorship. A man is needed who knows the orchestra and orchestral music inside out, a man who can really teach his team; a man who knows how to rehearse, and when time spent is time wisely used or wasted. That means the payment of a good price. It also means admitting that perhaps a mistake has been made already. But a Government ought to be up to admitting one mistake in the arts—if it doesn't have to admit, anyhow by implication, a good many more, it will be a preternaturally fortunate and unusual Government. Possibly Mr Braithwaite's patriotism would bring him out to New Zealand for, say, three years. If something like that happened, then we might hope for a team that would settle down together reasonably happily, without all these changes and rumours and counter-rumours. And then, with a nice balance between conductor and player, and mutual respect, we might hope for some dependably good playing of well-balanced programmes. We might, as a community, really begin our musical culture, so far as a native orchestra can give it to us. For if one thing is certain, it is that a new beginning is needed.

I wouldn't dare to hope for more than that in September. But if we could get a good new beginning in one year, then the next year might see some further improvement in organization; in time it might be possible even for the orchestra to be kept permanently together. Let us admit that some places might be poorly off for musicians during the whole year. Time would cure that. But even apart from a cure, could anything be worse for everybody than

the sort of thing we have had this year? There are some sorts of mockeries that are too sad.

ROBERT ALLENDER

THE NATIONAL FILM UNIT

COMMON opinion on the merit of the National Film Unit's work is violent and contradictory. It is unusual to find a New Zealand cinema-goer who considers its productions with analytical detachment, but even more unusual to find one who is not ever ready to offer a hot declaration of its worth. There are only two common answers to the question 'Do you like the films of the National Film Unit?'—an emphatic 'yes' or an indignant 'no'. Those who say 'yes' usually hold that its photography and many of its subjects are excellent. The 'no's' are outraged by what they call its 'governmental propaganda'. Extreme and irreconcilable as these opinions are, their existence proves that the unit has fulfilled its initial purpose: to depict New Zealand life with sufficient artistic and technical skill to catch the attention of New Zealand audiences. We might record that in seven years the unit has produced 350,000 feet of *Weekly Review,* that five of its films have been televised in England, that its work is done in a studio only 480 feet square. We might confound ourselves with statistics, with the opinions of our few film critics. While the facts and figures set down would be of some importance, they would not provide a starting point, an answer to the fundamental questions. Is it a national film unit? Is its work seen and criticized by the greater part of the nation? Of course the answer is 'Yes!' There are only four short features screened regularly which evoke much feeling among New Zealand audiences—*March of Time, Today and Tomorrow, This Modern Age, Weekly Review.* And our opinions of *Weekly Review* are usually the most fervid.

We are now experiencing the first excitement of self-con-

templation. Throughout our history we have been an obscure people, seldom noticed by anyone, least of all by ourselves. Recently, however, the world has taken more critical glances in our direction. At the same time we have looked in the glass and found the reflected image not half as displeasing as we expected. Like a child using a mirror for the first time, we want to look again and again and for the present we are resentful of strangers telling us that we are other than as we see ourselves. At this precocious moment the National Film Unit has been born. We are pleased that we have found another looking glass, unreceptive only when we think we perceive that it distorts for the satisfaction of an outside agency—the hostile body, 'the government'.

Weekly Review has had to establish itself in the full glare of overseas competition. On commercial programmes it has been sandwiched between American and English newsreels which have the advantage of age and experience, between slick features like *March of Time* and *Passing Parade,* between cartoons, technicolour travelogues and other films of almost universal popularity. *Weekly Review* has provided a new kind of film, very often an antithesis of the company in which it has been shown. Where James Fitzpatrick and Lowell Thomas show apricot sunsets on the Grand Canal, *Weekly Review* presents in plain black and white familiar scenes of our unexciting cities, pictures of our own working day. Attractive as they may be in the unit's photography, they do not match the exotic splendour in the American productions. They provide no counterpart of Bugs Bunny. In spite of these handicaps *Weekly Review* has become popular, because of its superiority in subject and treatment. The photography of an English or American newsreel seems misty and dull after an issue of *Weekly Review*. The brevity and superficiality of the imported films becomes apparent to almost everyone. Even Mr Fitzpatrick's colour is unexciting and his commentary is seen, probably for the first time, as emotive and highly flavoured. The National Film Unit has photographed well. Although the limited distribution of *Weekly Review* (until recently seventeen-print) has been a technical advantage, it does not entirely account for the excellence of photography which has aroused the most phlegmatic spectators.

The National Film Unit was established in 1941 as a

result of a report to the New Zealand Government by John Grierson, famous British director of documentary film and a leader of the documentary film movement. It seems doubtful whether his recommendations would have been acted upon if New Zaland had not been at war at the time. Realization of the importance of propaganda in modern warfare no doubt tipped the scales in favour of establishing a national film unit, a new propaganda force, in New Zealand. As there was no newsreel produced in the country, a newsreel to be known as *Weekly Review* was decided upon as the first main production. Most of us remember its original quality and reception: the unfortunate Maori Battalion titling motif and the laughter it provoked, the mainly shallow and dreary scenes of wartime activities. The appearance of our Prime Minister on the screen invariably caused loud amusement. It was all very well for Winston Churchill, but fancy our Mr Fraser in the pictures. It was too funny. This reaction did not last long. We soon became accustomed to the notion that New Zealanders were just as much entitled to appear in films as Englishmen or Australians and, once the initial mirth and embarrassment had subsided, we began to notice that although *Weekly Review* was preoccupied with subjects of passing importance, its treatment of most subjects was at least competent. One of the first signs of what was to come was the photography, even if it was restricted to sensitive shots of hills and clouds behind scenes of tanks marching past on the Waiouru Plains.

Before long the propagandist purpose of the unit's existence began to fade slightly. As it faded, the films improved. At first, the concept of film propaganda was absurdly restricted. Technicalities are seldom provocative. The tanks and bombs and troop carriers were so unexciting. *Weekly Review* became more engaging, won its first popularity, when its cameras tended to shift from troop carriers to troops. From that time until today, when it stands at an awkward crossroad between documentary and newsreel, its progress has been consistent.

One of the achievements of the unit has been the production of a more or less documentary feature of about a thousand feet at a rate usually possible only for newsreels—one a week. (Note that *March of Time* is a monthly production.) For this task the unit has not been lavishly equipped. Its directors and cameramen have been required

to work fast, sometimes so fast that the results gained have been miraculous. As a temporary measure to see *Weekly Review* and the unit as a whole through its first growth, the scheme has been effective, but changes are now necessary. Documentary and newsreel will not mix perfectly. *Weekly Review* has combined them as far as they can be combined. Football matches, road races and country fairs have been interpolated between essentially documentary subjects. The continuation of these mixtures is producing an unkind reaction to both ingredients. You are no sooner in a documentary frame of mind than the All Blacks arrive to play Wales. A fast tempo has just been established for newsreel sequences when it is replaced by the comparatively slow movement of a document on farmworkers. Obviously, we require a weekly newsreel and a series of documentaries, which need not be produced at a rate of more than one a month.

The unit is best fitted for the documentaries. But it must develop a more critical eye. While the sympathetic treatmen of New Zealand, the portrayal of our virtues with due pomp and reverence, is desirable, we cannot be all virtuous. Let us have our housing films to show us that we are not always behind the rest of the world, let us draw convenient comparisons occasionally, yet it is not enough to show ourselves only the things which please us. So far the National Film Unit has erred on the side of self-admiration. If it is to avoid the accusation that it exists merely to flatter the reigning government, it must seek out the less pleasant subjects, between maintaining lighthouses, manufacturing good New Zealand baths and slippers, find time to examine the things of which we have *no* cause to be proud. It is what the unit does not rather than what it does that is the proper subject of criticism.

For a long time the music of all National Film Unit productions was poor. Recently, however, the dubbed-in music has improved greatly and an overdue advance has been made by the composition and performance of special music for a few documentary reviews. Again the problem is caused by the mixing of newsreel with documentary. There is not time to compose or perform special music for a newsreel. For a documentary there is, and the best dubbed-in music (*Lighthouse Maintenance* and *Sydney 8 Hours* provide good examples) is only a makeshift. *Backblock Medical Service* showed that excellent film music (in this case Douglas Lil-

burn's) can be written and performed in New Zealand.

Commentaries have been and remain another weak point. Apart from a few experiments (most of them failures) the commentaries have remained comfortably in the rut established by overseas feature and newsreel producers. For the newsreel subjects they are perhaps good enough, for the documentaries quite inadequate. It is the same problem—the mixture which tends to curdle. The commercial radio voice, the conversational script are well suited to newsreels, out of place in more serious film. The commentary to *Weekly Review* is too often vapid and glib, a shade too similar to the last travelogue on Bermuda and this morning's one minute announcement for Wright's Coal Tar.

In the newsreel department the faults are different. There can be no complaint about the photography. Even by documentary standards it is good and photographic magnificence is not expected in the news. The main requirement is clear recording of events as they happen. Nearly always *Weekly Review* records news with sensitivity and beauty as well as clarity. What it fails in is catching enough news at the most newsworthy moment. The reason is obvious. It does not maintain a large, widely scattered staff of newsreel cameramen. If *Weekly Review* catches a news item it is usually because the date of the event is announced in advance or because by chance a cameraman is working nearby on another subject. If *Weekly Review* were broken up into a monthly documentary and a weekly newsreel this unsatisfactory state would have to be remedied. The Ballantyne fire, *Weekly Review's* biggest news success, was photographed by a cameraman who happened to be in Christchurch covering a local show. The camera was on the spot at the right time and produced a good record. The *Wanganella* incident did not turn out so happily. Although the film appeared in the main cities long before interest had waned, its poor quality led to general disappointment at such a sketchy record instead of wonderment at such a prompt one. The Frankton tornado was another disappointment, because of stereotyped treatment and one of those accidents which often happen when re-shooting is impossible. The re-opening of the Chateau, with its happy-holiday background music, lacked the sparkle of American or even Australian winter sports scenes. Audiences could not see inside the Chateau as *Weekly Review* had left its lights at home. The skiing was

photographed without care or imagination.

Weekly Review is a better documentary than newsreel. Nevertheless, none of its faults as a newsreel is of consequence. With adequate staff, equipment and experience the unit could produce a newsreel which would compete with any imported product. Its only big problem would be to find enough news without falling back upon studio shots of vaudeville or concert artists. Whatever happens, sequences of pianists, violinists or singers performing before black velvet in the studio should be avoided. They will always fail because motion pictures must move.

Until a few months ago, *Weekly Review* was distributed free to commercial cinemas. As only a few prints were available, in large cities it was screened at different cinemas each week. Cinema managers were inclined to discount the value of the gift. If a manager did not like a certain issue he would not screen it, or he might screen it only for the first few nights of the week. Recently, tenders were called for the right to screen *Weekly Review* and the tender of Kerridge Theatres was accepted. Since then it has been screened widely and with more respect, although it is said that *Rhythm and Music* was withdrawn in some cinemas after a few days' screening. No doubt the contract provides penalties for failure to screen any issue. It would be intolerable if a cinema magnate were allowed to censor the work of the National Film Unit.

In addition to the review, the unit is required to provide educational films for government departments and publicity films for screening overseas. In both spheres its output falls short of the demand. *Meet New Zealand,* a typical publicity film, has recently been screened before private audiences in New Zealand. The predominant criticism, that it portrays New Zealand too favourably, is invalid as long as one remembers the purpose for which it was made—screening at *Meet New Zealand* exhibitions in the United Kingdom. Presumably the exhibitions were held to remind Britain of our existence as an exporter and to attract immigrants. Immigrants should not suffer any disappointments as a result of seeing it. It is truthful, there are not too many omissions and it is superior to previous publicity films on New Zealand. Typical of its style is the exposure of pictures of Maori maidens standing beside geysers as tourist pamphlet decorations.

The National Film Unit has reached a critical age. It cannot continue for long merely as a producer of the hybrid *Weekly Review,* and educational and publicity films when time, space and money can be spared. *Weekly Review* must be divided into its obvious parts; facilities for greater educational and overseas publicity production should be provided as soon as possible. And the unit is now sufficiently old and experienced to begin feature film production. Basically, it is quite well fitted to make a *Bush Christmas.* Huge technical and financial resources are not the most important factors in film-making. Observe what happened in Australia when an American company attempted a life of Sir Charles Kingsford Smith. Remember *Man From Down Under.* And remember *Bush Christmas* and *The Overlanders,* both made on comparatively small budgets without mountains of commercial paraphernalia. If we failed we could not do worse than *Green Dolphin Street.* But we would not fail. In many issues of *Weekly Review* there is evidence that we are ready to begin a feature film, provided of course that we proceed with humble sense rather than commercial aspirations.

The National Film Unit will not remain indefinitely in its present adolescence. If it is given the facilities and the independence it will grow and improve, otherwise it will languish. The energy of all who believe in its future should now be directed to securing its expansion and complete freedom. Originally a branch of the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts, the unit is now part of the Prime Minister's Department. The change in control indicates a swing from scenery to propaganda, and leads to the accusation that the unit is primarily a government propaganda force. No matter how baseless the claim may be, it will be levelled as long as the unit is denied independence. Although its present size is small it should soon grow and as it grows the need for freedom must increase. On the other hand, if it is not freed it may not grow at all. Its future depends upon whether it will be granted at least as much freedom and independence as the Broadcasting Service. The ideal course would be its establishment as a self-governing state corporation. Criticism of its propagandist intentions would be quelled, and almost certainly its work would improve. So the first task of the unit should be to disentangle itself from departments concerned only incidentally with the production of films. Its future welfare and development might

thus be ensured.

Note. Unfortunately it is not possible to reproduce any shots from the films referred to because the unit has not been making stills of them.

COMMENTARIES

JOSEPH B. O'NEILL

THE OLD VIC

The period of anticipation while we awaited the arrival of the Old Vic Company was in the nature of a Thespian Advent. There were pedal and pecuniary penances, and there were the applications of grace by re-reading the plays to ensure we should enter into this new experience prepared and watchful. In realization on that first night in Auckland we felt more than amply rewarded. And now, in retrospect, while

> we dismantle the tree,
> Putting the decorations back in their cardboard boxes,

we can stand off a little and try to assess the events of those eleven days.

Let me say to begin with that I do not think a better variety of plays could have been chosen — Shakespeare, a period piece, and a modern of the moderns which took us back to the old folk plays and forward to the days of a new theatre.

Undoubtedly the smoothest production was *The School for Scandal.* The posturing, the incredible use of expanses of stage, the vitality and grace of dance-like movement, and of course the Beaton scenery and costumes were too much to absorb at one viewing. It was only by attending again that the amount of thought, imagination and technical skill could be really appreciated. Never before had I been able to relax and enjoy, without any fear of having to make

allowances for the slightest flaw. To begin with, I could not agree with the raucous vulgarity of Mrs Candour, and I still question this performance, but the capability of this company to compel acceptance was almost frightening. Only over a cup of coffee in the early hours was the effect dispelled and it was possible to say truly yea or nay. Fine as Laurence Olivier's and Vivien Leigh's performances were (his was the most moving yet humorous Sir Peter that could be imagined and her's an annoyingly coquettish and thoroughly delightful Lady Teazle), still, what stands out is Peter Cushing's portrayal of Joseph Surface. When have we seen such hypocrisy embodied in every sliding step, every flutter of the hand, in speech and even in immobility! One of the enduring memories of the short season.

Richard III, coming immediately after, would have failed but for the inspiration of Olivier. Yet, it was only the latter part of the play that really compensated for many weaknesses. Strangely, the cynically evil tyrant was made a likeable fellow with whom we enjoyed lopping off opponents' heads. No doubt there are humour and wit in Richard, but in him they are evil qualities. To build up such a sympathetic response in his audiences as Olivier did in order to quash it later for dramatic effect, savours a little too much of a theatrical trick. Where this lightness was successful was in the first meeting with Anne. ' What acting can render tolerable ', says Thomas Barnes in his assessment of Kean's Richard, ' this nauseous scene, in which female weakness has been exaggerated merely as a foil to the overbearing influence of Richard's mind? ' As the answer for him was Kean, so ours is Olivier. But the point at which it failed was in the near-burlesque of the chapel window where book tossing and window vaulting ill became the scheming hypocrite that Richard is. The second part, however, was a steadily mounting picture of ruthlessness and final despair and almost redeemed what had gone before. Here were the solid reasons for revival of a part that only genius can touch. This was the Olivier lyricized by Sybil Thorndike and the inspired actor we had so long and eagerly awaited.

Peter Cushing again impressed with a splendid performance of Clarence, while Terence Morgan completed those capable of carrying such a play. Vivien Leigh's inadequacy was matched by that of George Relph's Buckingham, while Eileen Beldon's Margaret reminded me of the Irish fiddler,

spoken of by Shaw, who when asked if he played by ear or from notes, replied that he played ' by main strength '.

Does the Old Vic's *The Skin of Our Teeth* give us some inkling why American plays seem so often to fail in England? This play is so general in its appeal and application that there is no necessity to present it with any pseudo-Americanisms. It is not necessary to stress that a test of a good play is its universality. Olivier does not seem to think that the Wilder possesses this quality. Is he of the opinion that Pirandello should be played only in Italian, or Sartre in England be exclusive to the fortunate who understand French? Thornton Wilder is too broad to be localized. And what can we say of Olivier's conception, as producer, of the role of Esmeralda? Here we should have been made to sit up and take notice of this prophetess' warnings, but instead we witnessed a cheap cackling charlatan who did ill to rebuke others with her own foremost quality. In spite of the really splendid moments the production possessed, I feel Olivier does not understand this play. If he did, how could he possibly have failed in these instances, and how *could* he have played for comedy the break out of character with Henry in the last act, to me the most important ' break ' in the whole work because of its revelation of immediate evil. It has been contended that this scene was not played for comedy. If not, then the play had been such a romp up to then that Olivier lost control of his audience. An unhappy implication either way. This play succeeded in England, as it did here largely, but I think we can have some idea of the reason for the failure of American plays in England, for others possibly cannot withstand the incomprehension of the producer. This does not mean that the performance here was a failure. The performance of Olivier himself, the capability of Eileen Beldon as Mrs Antrobus, Terence Morgan's Henry and Vivien Leigh's Second Act Sabina, together with the sets and the technical perfection in lighting and and stage effects generally made it instructive and at times deeply moving. Of course the beauty of this play is that it is open to so many variations of treatment, but there are certain essentials that must be observed and it is with the lack of appreciation of those I have mentioned that I disagree.

But controversy about Olivier is not confined to the boards. During an address at Auckland University College

he stated his belief in the importance of the theatre in the cultural life of a community, and stressed its educative function. He then recommended amateur groups to commence production with drawing-room comedies, and to move to Shakespeare only when they felt they must do that or 'bust'. No mention of planning to that end, or of considering that perhaps audiences must see Shakespeare or 'bust'. It can happen that they do not know their liability to 'bust' until the tragedy has occurred. Olivier also deprecated the shallow interest in drama that the amateur possesses. In this he must surely be forming his judgment on his experience of amateur societies in England (though a perusal of the reports of Adult Education committees there would seem to discredit this). As he admitted, he spoke as a professional, and as such perhaps resents encroachment on his field. To be fair, he recommended that amateurs should continue functioning in New Zealand as this is the only theatre we have, but he seemed to imply that they were of little use once a professional theatre was established. He obviously knows little of the type of professional theatre we have been asked to accept. But even if the Old Vic itself should found a branch here we could still do with the selflessness and devotion and originality of those New Zealanders who devote so much of their time to theatrical work, not for a living, but out of real love for the theatre itself.

Some sound things were said about our proposed National Theatre, the most important being the reminder that the theatre is made up first of actors and producers, then of technical experts, and that only then, when we are sure of these, should we think of erecting buildings to act in. This is important, for no matter how splendidly equipped our theatre may be, it is useless without the players. While there seem to be all sorts of projects for building auditoriums, we don't hear a great deal about a competent school of drama. That should come first and then we will have the beginnings of a true National Theatre. It is a timely piece of advice, and one we should act on.

If this visit of the Old Vic Company does nothing else, the controversy that has arisen from what was done and what was said should revitalize the only theatre we have—the amateur—and so, together with what we have learnt from the three productions, should give us standards which were sadly lacking before.

MAURICE DUGGAN

DOCTOR FAUSTUS

THE history of the Faust legend is a long one. There are several parallel developments of it, in the legend of Cyprian of Antioch (the Calderon drama), and in the legend of Theophilus, to instance two examples. But the Faust legend differs from these in one essential respect: of the three only Faustus is denied an ultimate salvation.

In the light of this scanty examination it may seem unwarranted to name as a characteristic of the Faust legend this ultimate damnation of Faust, but yet I believe this to be the point of insistence and variation; and in my own view of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* I take it to be the real climax, in the same way as I take the Helen scenes to be the unreal or fantasy climax—the indulgence that is the greatest reward Faustus can receive from the practice of ' magic and the concealed arts '. The success or failure of the play, as a production, is tied up with the extent to which these points are stressed or obscured. For reasons which I hope to make clear I think the Auckland University College Drama Society evaded the issue by giving an equal insistence to all parts of the play.

Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* suggests two points of view: it may be related to the old Morality play in its particular construction and in the episodic quality of its scenes, or these episodes may be taken as a sort of sketch-map guide to the character of Faustus and to the extra-human territory he sought to explore. There are other possible interpretations but they involve one or both of these views. The A.U.C. Drama Society presentation sought to combine both and it was here that the production did, essentially, fail.

Professor Musgrove was faced with the lack of any real facilities right from the start. Those who know the Auckland Town Hall concert chamber will appreciate this. Much must be subtracted from my criticisms on that count. It is surprising that in the face of such difficulties the imaginative touches succeeded as well as they did. Masks were used for the Seven Deadly Sins and for Helen and in the Helen

scene the mask was removed to reveal, to the audience but not to Faustus, the death's head beneath. This was a subtle and effective piece of visual imagery.

Beyond the technical difficulties of which I have spoken the production insisted too strongly on the element of visual realism. The unmasking of Helen was poetic imagery, the comic scenes and the costuming were not. The work put into these might well have been spent to *pace* the play and to avoid the continual hurrying of the lines and the sacrifice of the poetry. Again, Faustus raises up a ' walkabout ' Helen, but the spirits of Alexander and his paramour, ' such spirits as can lively resemble Alexander and his paramour ', appeared as a static projection on a screen. Had the production carried through this stylization there could have been no objection. Further, Faustus was allowed to read through all the Latin in the study scene, and the incantations, in themselves dull fare, were given in full.

In several places I prefer the earlier text to the later. Working from both Professor Musgrove did not always make the happier choice. The knight whom Faustus curses with a pair of horns has a more meaningful scepticism in the earlier text than the Benvolio of the later one. In this instance Benvolio was marked out as a vehicle for some tedious buffoonery. In this sort of fooling the clown whom Wagner secures to his service was more adept, at ease with the audience and inviting them to participate in and applaud his humour. This deserves comment as it brought the clowning into relation with the audience and came very close to what one thinks of as the ' spirit ' of audience participation of the Elizabethan stage.

Faustus (Marshall Hobson) gave, in my view, an unsatisfactory performance when his work is viewed as a whole. Where the verse demanded reading rather than interpretation he was adequate but where his part demanded the intensity of emotion he was forced back on stiff and overdramatic gesture and too much movement about the stage. A disagreeable trick of sobbing out his lines lost much to the audience. Mephistophilis (Jack Woods) represented a different conception. His voice was clear and firm throughout and he relied for physical effect upon an economy of gesture that was, dramatically, sufficiently forceful. But it must here be admitted that the part of Faustus makes a much greater demand upon the actor, an involved

temperament of acting as opposed to the stolidity of Mephistophilis.

If one measures the success of the play in relation to the stature of the final scene, it was here that the playing of Faustus was most inadequate. The great intensity of the broken and staccato lines was weakened. Faustus, racked with groans, hurled himself upon the floor, and it was from the floor that he spoke the lines beginning:

See, see, where Christ's blood streams in the firmament.

Marlowe's *Faustus*, in any view, is fragmentary, bound together only by the detail of the Faust legend and the surety of Faustus' damnation. There is some beautiful poetry in the play, not indeed a great wealth of it but enough to *carry* the play. There is not enough of it to overshadow the drama and therefore, for me, the play's success is bound up with the growth of this poetry within it. When the poetry is almost entirely obscured, as it was here, the play has to stand as a spectacle and I do not believe it can do so. A serious production like this demands serious criticism. We depend upon such groups as the Auckland University College Dramatic Society for 'uncommercial' plays. Much of my criticism of *Dr Faustus* is rather a criticism of the complete dearth of facilities. In the end I could perhaps have found as much to be laudatory of as I have found to be critical of. That, I think, says a great deal.

REVIEWS

DISPUTED GROUND. POEMS 1939-45. Charles Brasch. The Caxton Poets No. 3. The Caxton Press. 6/-.

THE theme but not the character of Mr Brasch's poetry is indicated by the title of his new book. Most of the poems in the book are about some situation of which the most striking feature is the presence or absence of conflict. Implicitly or explicitly they remind us that

the ground on which we ordinarily stand is, indeed, disputed by warring powers. But the poems which seem to me successful are those which lead to this truth only by a devious path and then, perhaps, lead quite beyond it. Mr Brasch's gift is in describing not the desires and contours of what, for most people, is the real world but in conveying the presence of another world altogether—a personal world of calm, remote, archetypal beings for whom conflict is unthinkable. He finds some fine symbols for this world—among them the Colossi of Memnon which he describes in one of the best poems in the book:

> Immovable sunlit presences that cannot
> Share or speak or mitigate, and yet
> By their mere neighbourhood to man endue him
> With more than human stature.

The life of the earlier inhabitants of our islands also serves as an expression of his world. The vagueness of the phrase is necessary both because of his oblique and, as it were, tentative approach to the life of the Maoris and because of his sense that their life was not separated from non-human existence as is our own. He builds the poem 'Genesis' from images that apply both to the general development of life on earth and to the migration of the Polynesians:

> They felt the strength of rock in hardening bones,
> Watched their hands take shape like mountain ridges
> And valleys between their limbs darkening,
> While tides of sleep and hunger flushed their veins.

The poems are free from the self-conscious geography that has appeared in too much verse and prose about New Zealand's origins:

> Becalmed among the rocks the seabirds nest,
> The rains fall on the waste and on the sown;
> Hunter and hunted to each other known
> By the same need are driven or laid to rest.

These quotations should give some idea of the nature of Mr Brasch's achievement. The boundaries of that achievement, also, can be traced in 'Disputed Ground'. Most often when he attempts to deal with some situation that is earthly, troubled, limited, the pulse of his imagination fails and his verse becomes unsatisfying. The point may be illustrated by the first poem in the book—'Forerunners'. The vague charm of this poem breaks down in the last lines where our present existence is compared with the integral life of the past:

> Behind our quickness, our shallow occupation of the easier
> Landscape, their unprotesting memory
> Mildly hovers, surrounding us with perspective,
> Offering soil for our rootless behaviour.

The trouble is not really that it is hard to write poetically about unpoetic subject matter. The subject remains unpoetic only because its true nature is not expressed, because the rhythms that flow through it as through the rest of creation are not realized and traced by the appropriate patterns of sound and visual imagery. That this can and should be done Mr Brasch knows as well as anyone. The need to

suffer the particular incident and transmute it is one of the constant themes of the book, notably of 'Waitaki Revisited' which, I imagine, may be regarded as one of its crucial poems. In it the conflict is stated—

> . . . here you found me; here, O dissonant sea,
> And sky's intent, absolving calm, you spoke
> And entered, making me your joint possession,
> Your battleground and home.

On the whole I feel the poem fails in its purpose to present us with a convincing image of the struggle. The endeavour to depict the 'dissonant' world leads to some quite unsuccessful effects—the unhappy list of place names culminating in one dreadful phrase

> . . . the lawless, the hoarse
> Unappeasable Waimakariri,

and there is something contrived about the details of landscape as there generally is when he is describing some particular locality—

> . . . the land's low terrace, where only a broken
> Formation of taciturn salt-stung macrocarpas
> Binds the poor clay, in narrow corridors arched,
> Precarious refuge of night.

It is a paradox but one that naturally arises from the nature of Mr Brasch's gift that though he does not succeed in turning the conflict itself into poetry he does find truly poetic imagery to indicate its resolution when the spirit begins

> . . . its solitary passage
> Swept by a vast wind and the wintry, perpetual
> Flashing of violent stars.

Needless to say, it does not follow from all this that Mr Brasch is under a misapprehension as to the nature of his task and that all he needs to do to write consistently fine poetry is to turn from the conflicting and the transcient. After all, the Colossi of Memnon and the Polynesians did first exist in the terrestrial world and other poems in the book that are about subjects of equal stillness lack the quality that these poems have. Among these less successful poems are those in which Mr Brasch prays eloquently after the manner of Auden. An example is the poem 'Great Sea':

> Speak in the night, compelling
> The frozen heart to hear,
> The memoried to forget.

Nor would it be altogether truthful to suggest that he cannot transmute the emotions into poetry. He does this in at least one poem where he tells how on the mountains of pain there may be a refuge:

> There earth's life will speak to you again,
> An insect in the grasses, a meagre bird,
> That in that outpost faithfully maintain
> The pulse of being so slowly, weakly heard.

The echoes of Rilke in this and other poems seem truer than echoes of Rilke usually are in English verse, the result of a genuine affinity

and not of a fashion. Like Rilke and like the baby in one of his own poems the writer of the best of the poems in 'Disputed Ground'

> Has the air of one looking back, by death set free,
> Who sees the strangeness of life, and what things are
> trying to be.

It is this quality of distance that seems to me notable in Mr Brasch's poetry. He does not attain his effects by describing experience with a precise intensity or by revealing its vast and hidden patterns. The world that emerges from the best poems in 'Disputed Ground' is built from fragments of experience seen, as it were, from some way off and recorded appropriately in remote or cloudy images. The existence of this world seems to me one of the more interesting facts in New Zealand literature.

Hubert Witheford.

HORIZON. A REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART. Edited by Cyril Connolly. Monthly, 2/6.

THE appearance in April this year of the one hundredth number of the leading English literary periodical prompts some reflections on its career.

'Horizon' entered, in January 1940, a literary landscape of depressing bareness. The thirties and all they stood for had been brought symbolically to an end, as Mr Connolly observed in his second number, with the departure of Auden and Isherwood for America soon after Munich. But more than the thirties was over: with the extinction a year earlier of 'The Criterion', which Mr Eliot decided had lived long enough, and the eclipse of 'The Adelphi' following the latest of the metamorphoses through which Mr Middleton Murry had led it, all the promise of the years after the first war seemed to have died too. No independent journal which served not only letters but ideas survived. The whole period had ended in failure.

'Horizon' was thus given the opportunity, however hampered it might be by the war, of gathering up whatever could be saved from the wreck of the peace that had proved no peace and reaching out towards something new. It was not unaware of the opportunity. In its second number the editor declared that it would reassert, after the failure of social realism, of which the departure of Auden and Isherwood was a main symptom, that 'writing is an art, that it is an end in itself as well as a means to an end', and that before 'Horizon' could 'go forward with a progressive policy a reconstruction is necessary'. The same editorial concluded, 'One day we will surprise [readers] with a policy too.'

That promise—if promise it be, for it was provoked by criticisms of the first number complaining that the journal had announced no policy—has never been carried out. In no. 6, Mr Connolly wrote that 'Horizon's' policy 'is a literary policy, and nothing more', in other words one of printing not 'new' writing or writing from a particular standpoint or with particular ends in view, but simply good writing;

it is a policy of having no policy except to print 'the best writing available'.

But 'the best available' may be interpreted in various ways. We must ask what Mr Connolly meant by it.

For eight years now 'Horizon' has been the only major literary journal in England (that is, of the monthlies and quarterlies): it established itself at once, setting a standard which it has on the whole maintained. It has been exclusive without narrowness, varied, stimulating; it has printed work by most of the best writers of the day. It sought in particular long poems and critical studies, and with notable success—witness Auden's elegies on Freud and Henry James, Dylan Thomas's 'Vision and Prayer', V. S. Pritchett's examination of Koestler and Graham Greene's of Herbert Read, Tangye Lean on Toynbee, Arturo Barea on Lorca, and many other essays on authors English, French, Italian, Russian, etc.

Yet I think it would be fair to say that it has been a disappointment, in a way which, in their time, 'The Criterion' and 'The Adelphi' were not. As the war dragged on, and month by month one turned to 'Horizon' searching hungrily if vaguely for some kind of light on what was happening, its inadequacy became only too apparent. Not that one looked for any direct light—that would have been chimerical, but one naturally expected in its pages to find a common ground for the meeting of so many and such a range of talents as it commanded (and it must be remembered that it was the only journal of its kind), and the consequent adumbration of some possible standpoint from which to view the bewildering events of the time. The journals I have mentioned at least had a point of view, even if one disagreed with them; but 'Horizon' appeared to have none, except that in a general undefined way the arts were a good thing, and that to preserve our freedom to enjoy and practise them we must fight the Nazis: it implied that it was not possible for the intellectual independent of creed or party to make up his mind about anything, because there were no sure grounds upon which any decision could be based: a justifiable position no doubt, but scarcely an adequate one from which to conduct a review of literature and art. It is hardly surprising that some of its distinguished contributors appeared at times to jostle rather than to meet.

'The New Statesman' commented approvingly on the occasion of this same centenary number, that 'Horizon' 'has lived at the centre of the confusions of our time.' Indeed it was itself one of the centres of confusion. It offered the latest ('avant-garde' is the word) in literature and painting, with frequent glances at philosophy and psychology and politics, so that it should have served as a useful forum for ideas: but because it seemed to offer them unrelated and indiscriminate and suggested no consistent point of view from which they might be assessed, it implied that there could be no way out of the confusion.

Further, it printed from time to time—too often for it to be chance, and one cannot believe that it had no other material to choose from—work that was surprisingly trivial and irrelevant (for example the dreary instalments, sixteen or more of them to date, of Augustus John's autobiographical chit-chat), and in its apparent insensitiveness

to many of the larger issues of the time which might properly have concerned it, it made the position of the English intellectual, which it was taken to represent, look unhappily frivolous.

It is inevitable that a journal like 'Horizon' should come to be very largely identified with its editor, whose personal outlook cannot but help to form its character, so that it seems permissible to consider Mr Connolly's books for the light they may throw upon his editorship.

Reviewing two books by him in 'The Adelphi' for July 1946, Mr Middleton Murry wrote, 'What is chiefly noticeable about Mr Connolly is that his felicity as a critic of style is apparently unrelated to any system of values. He seems never to judge the content of a book: nor does he give any indication of the standards by which he would judge it if he were compelled to do so. For him, aesthetic excellence is autonomous'. This is clearly reflected in 'Horizon'. It disappoints because it has no standards except literary ones, and these are not enough. They enable one to judge if a work is good, but not, as between two or more works equally good from a literary point of view, which of them is more important. The notion of importance is not a literary one, but it is essential to the judgment of literature, which is not to be judged, finally, on purely literary grounds. For literature is concerned not only with the aesthetic, with beauty, but also with truth.

It must be said in fairness that 'Horizon' reflects a situation in which so many 'truths' had been preached and pursued and found wanting (as happened between the wars) that a widespread exhaustion had resulted. But the exhaustion, a moral exhaustion, was far from complete: as events proved abundantly, England believed in itself, while various positive attitudes survived, and fidelities deep-rooted if seldom explicit. To that extent, 'Horizon' is unrepresentative. England may not yet be ready for more 'truths'; the present seems to be a period of literary miscellanies of a kind which avoid ideas. (But it is worth noting here the appearance in Edinburgh of a new journal, 'Scottish Periodical,' edited by Ronald Gregor Smith, whose first two numbers are of unusual distinction.) 'Horizon's' apparent claim, in the editorial comment in this one hundredth number, to be English culture is in any case naive. English culture could survive the demise of 'Horizon', which Mr Connolly hints that he may bring about when it has completed its tenth year. The loss would be regrettable, but it would not now be as significant as it might have been five years ago.

The role which 'Horizon' has played is that—to borrow a favourite term of Mr Connolly's—of a 'culture-diffusionist'; a neutral role, but a very important one. In the wider sense it has not made any positive statement: over a long period it has revealed or implied no consistent intellectual attitude. Yet it has done much in a dark age to keep alive the tradition of letters, it is still doing so; and for that it surely deserves all the support we can give it.

C.B.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor

Sir: Professor Wood in your last issue has not always been successful in understanding what I intended to say. You have already been most generous in giving space and twenty pages should have been enough to explain what I did mean. Might I have a little more space to explain what I did not mean?

Professor Wood says that I find 'in New Zealand public life scarcely a hint of positive good—of warmth or generosity, of respect for principles or genuinely held ideals'. In fact, my whole survey was an attempt to describe the struggle between the generosity (and with it the sentimentalism) so strongly rooted in the Labour Party tradition, and the principles of the Labour Movement.

The effect of my analysis was to vindicate rather than condemn our Labour leaders. Professor Wood imputes to me the belief that New Zealand 'failure to implement "socialism" is a betrayal of the idealism of the past'. In fact, I believe that failure to implement 'socialism' has been enforced by the nature of man in this time and place.

All this I thought I had made clear in many ways—for instance, by setting this sentence of Dr Evatt's at the top of the article: 'Political Labour's struggle towards socialism is dependent upon Mill's hypothesis that mankind shall continue to improve'; and by trying to relate this question to that 'general slackness' in the community which Professor Wood finds to blame and which I also spent some time in discussing.

My main criticism of our own Labour leaders has been that they have failed to recognize and admit the doctrinal change which has been imposed upon them by necessity and experience; so, while toiling, often effectively, often wisely and nearly always disinterestedly, they have wrapped themselves in the disreputable garments of hypocrisy to conceal from the simple old men of the tribe that they have deserted the true and intransigent faith.

Nor has this further point apparently emerged with the clarity that it should: I believe it inevitable that every social-democratic administration brought face to face with the infirmities of men will modify its plans in the interests of what is possible; but to discern the inadequacies of man should not be to despair of him.

I do not believe that Labour leaders in New Zealand have despaired of the common man, but they have behaved sometimes with as much cynicism as if they had. The right wing of the Labour Party is culpable for too often accepting the prejudices of the electorate as fixing impassable barriers to policy. In fact, the right wing are as culpable in minimizing the willingness of the people to follow the path of duty as the left are stupid in imagining that once 'socialism' is introduced the baser prejudices and more self-seeking desires of the populace will be at once exorcized.

This is repetition in summary of ideas previously expounded at greater length, but I give it because of the seriousness of the miscon-

ceptions I appear to have planted. One such misunderstanding, and an important one for which I do not feel entirely to blame, is Professor Wood's belief that my definition of socialism was also my ideal of good government.

Blackwood Paul.

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Notes on Contributors

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JAMES COURAGE. Born in Amberley, now living in London. His play *Private History* was produced at the Gate Theatre, London, in 1938, and his second novel, *The Fifth Child*, has recently been published by Constable.

D'ARCY CRESSWELL. Born in Christchurch 1896, now living in London. Author of *The Poet's Progress*, *Lyttelton Harbour*, *Present without Leave*, etc.

RUTH DALLAS. Born in Invercargill 1919. Served three years in the army in N.Z. Poems in *The Southland Times* and *N.Z. Listener*.

MAURICE DUGGAN. Has contributed short stories to *Speaking for Ourselves*, *Book*, *Anvil*, *Irish New Writing*, etc. Lives in Auckland.

LOUIS JOHNSON. Born in Wellington 1924. Journalist on a Wellington newspaper. Now working on a series of short stories.

GRAHAM KEMBLE WELCH. Born in Masterton. For the past three years medical officer in Hokianga special area. Aged 26.

ERIC LEE-JOHNSON. Born in Suva, studied at Elam and at the Central and Camberwell Schools of Art in London and lived in England from 1929-1938. Has worked as typographer, illustrator, photographer and designer; since 1943 has devoted all his time to painting.

JOSEPH B. O'NEILL. Born 1916 in Auckland, where he is a member of the W. E. A. Dramatic Club.

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